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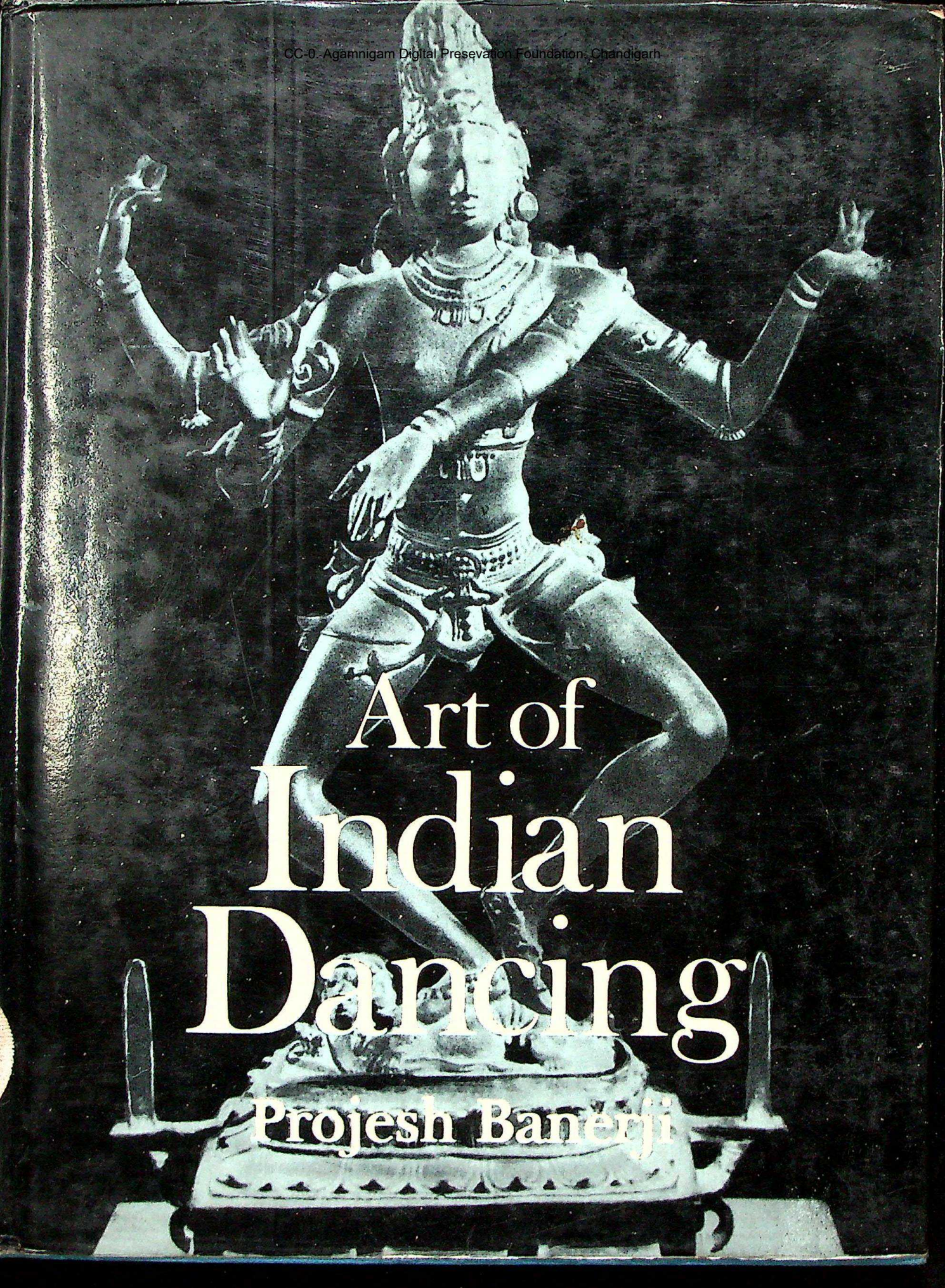

Art of Indian Dancing

Projesh Banerji

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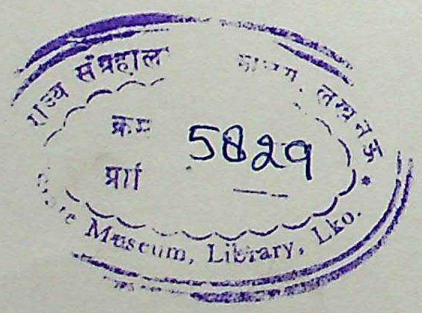

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PREFACE

I took it into my head to write a book on Indian dance art just after I came out of the University in 1937 and worked very hard for it for more than four years. The book saw the light of day in early 1942. At that time my entire endeavour was to explain to the educated public through my work the rich heritage and the lofty culture our country possessed in its dance art. It was looked down upon by society in general; so much so that girls of the rich and specially of the middle class families were reluctant to appear on the stage for fear of being castigated.

Even now after a lapse of more than forty years an appreciable change is yet to show. Though there is a craze for dancing and girls learn it up to a certain age, they do so largely as a passport to marriage. Little attention is given to learning the technicalities and the inherent beauty and grace of the art. For this, cinema and cabarets are among other factors responsible to a great extent.

Teachers and institutions lay emphasis on teaching the bare rules, regulations and technicalities of classical dance. Admittedly none can teach the grace and charm of the art. These are imbibed not by learning but by feeling, which has to be developed amidst a number of other factors: social surroundings, environment, education, heredity, life experience, etc.

Another regrettable matter is that even now Indian dance does not find a place as a subject in the curricula of most schools or colleges although music enjoys a coveted place even up to M.A. in certain universities. In some of the colleges imparting physical education, folk dancing or eurhythmics are taught as a physical exercise. Educationists of the present age here have failed to realise the indispensable value of dance as a vital subject, which enriches the knowledge of other arts and sciences and life in general. It is to make my contribution towards a better awareness of the value of dance that I took up my pen again, at a ripe old age, to bring out a more detailed work on Indian dance which, I hope, will be helpful to art lovers, artists, educationists, teachers and patrons of dance at large.

To have a fuller idea of the richness of Indian dance another book of mine entitled "Folk Dance of India" should be read along with the present work.

I am grateful to my son, Sri P.S. Banerji, for his drawings of the body postures, and to my younger brother, Sri N. Banerji, for the hand gestures.

PROJESH BANERJI

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INTRODUCTION

Origin of Dance

WE come across loose comments about the origin of Indian dance and music—that the first sound (Nad), or more correctly, musical sound, was created by the Damaru (drum) of God Shiva, or dancing emanated from the cosmic movements of the same God. Doubtless these are myths, but they show the high pitch to which the thinkers and art lovers of our land raised these forms of art and to what extent they adored them by associating them with the Supreme Being.

When the ancient thinkers could not give a rational explanation for the existence of the forces and powers superior to mankind they took their existence for granted and personified them giving them some attributes. This personification is a great conception of art. When their rational thinking could not find any solution of the sources which provided them with air, water and light, they personified them as elements more powerful and stronger than man, and believed in their existence as axiomatic truth. Later on, they personified them, gave them shape and form of different gods, namely Pavana (God of wind), Varuna (God of rain) and Surya Deva (Sun god) respectively, attaching particular attributes suited to their functions and qualities. This kind of thinking resulted in a galaxy of major gods and goddesses, their male and female forms with respective and peculiar qualifications being again the outcome of the artistic mind. In this way gradually by sheer rational and artistic bend of the mind the gods of dance and music were created and their origin explained.

Let us take an example; the myth that Hindu dance springs from God Shiva. Shiva means *Sundaram*. Ideal beauty is *Shiva*. Hence we have the words "*Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram.*" The pinnacle of beauty is Shiva who is truth. So the highest form of Beauty is art and that art or Beauty is personified in the form of God Shiva, who is truth. In other words the most beautiful movement of the body is the Hindu conception of the origin of dance.

Let us take another example to elucidate the origin of beautiful movements which are attributed to female body. We get innumerable instances of the Apsaras or the dancing nymphs of the Heavens in the

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court of Indra. It will be surprising for readers to know that Apsara was the name for cloud. *Apah* means water and *Sarasa* means reservoir of water, and the words are found in all the ancient texts, beginning from the time of the *Vedas*. The various commentators, compilers of dictionaries of Vedic terms and *Vishwakosha* testify to this. The artists and poets visualised clouds in multifarious gay colours moving in a sprightly dancing way over the skies, and personified them as the dancing nymphs of the Heaven. Probably Kalidasa was inspired in a like manner before producing his immortal *Meghadootam*. Later on legends went further in beautification and adorations. Personification gradually multiplied losing the original idea of the creation of the *Apsaras*.

Again, according to Hindu conception, dance is the elixir of life. What is the elixir of life without which we cannot live? The answer undoubtedly is water, and pure water is Amrita (nectar), essential for longevity. The legend goes on to say that there were bitter fights between the gods and the Asuras (demons) to possess Amrita or pure water, as at that time the world was enveloped with sea water, which is saltish and as such unsuitable for drinking. Then the ocean was churned and Amrita was brought forth. This is even now the modern scientific method of getting pure water from salt water.

We can now safely go a step further in our contention that cloud or water naturally is elixir of life. The terminology in the artistic mind of a Hindu thinker is Apsara for cloud, hence Apsara, or the ideal beautiful female form must be the elixir of life. Our Upanishadas (scriptures) affirm that woman or Prakriti (nature) is elixir of life; without woman, man cannot live and prosper.

The artist's mind also conceives of the idea that while Apsara or a beautiful woman is graceful movements of dance personified, and while she is the elixir of life, dance can also be said to be elixir of life. But this is all Hindu conception, the way of propounding their ideas shows how great artists they were, how acute their aesthetic sense and experiences and in what high esteem they used to hold the fine arts.

About the creation of 'Apsaras' the sage Bharata, the author of the encyclopaedia of dance and music, speaks in his *Natya Shastra*, that as the graceful (Kaishiki) style could not be properly practised by men, the powerful Lord (Brahma) created from his mind nymphs who were skilful in embellishing the drama. In other words, the institution of Apsaras is a beautiful creation of the human mind. And secondly, it is felt that there is the necessity of both male and female movements of the body, one a virile type of movement and the other more soft, graceful and feminine.

This brings us to a novel conception of the origin of dance in India, and that is that when the experts and thinkers of the art and science of dancing found the necessity of both manly and womanly movements in this particular branch of fine arts, i.e., in other words, Tandava (manly) and Lasya (womanly) movements, they took the five natural phenomena or elements into consideration, namely, (Panchabhut)—Fire (Agni), Air (Vayu),

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Water (Vari), Earth or soil (Prithvi or *Mrittika*) and Sky or Atmosphere (Akasha or Vyom), and imbibed from them both the kinds of movements; their bold and wild, and also, on the contrary, their gentler and softer movements. The movements in fire's destructive aspect as well as the mild aspect of an earthen oil lamp, ripples of a rivulet and an agitated ocean during the monsoon, storm and breeze, were analysed for various movements; and the artist's mind again synchronised them with the movements emanating from human body of both the sexes.

Mrittika (earth or soil) plays a very significant role in dance, as dance is the natural expression of the soil of the land. Eventually the aim of every artistic pursuit is eternal peace and Chirananda, which can be obtained in Vyom or Shunya—the region beyond the earth, the land of peace or cosmos, where Shiva dances the cosmic dance.

Dance as Art of Lines

Another curious aspect of Indian dance is that it, for practical purposes, is a mixture of visible lines, as other arts are. The written language which is constituted mainly of words, and which are, in their turn, a combination of letters, are nothing, but lines, either curved or straight. For example, A.B.C. or the letters in Hindi or in any other language, are nothing but combination of some curved or straight lines. Then we have made rules and regulations over those letters (and named them as ALPHABET) that if the mixture of particular lines denote some particular figures, they will be termed according to the principles and nomenclature laid down for the alphabet. In this way we call "a", which is a mixture of lines, to be "a" and nothing else but "a". We cannot call it "b" or "c" or "d". Likewise we have codified and made rules about words, their construction into sentences, which when linked up with proper thoughts can turn out to be literature.

In the same manner the art of music, dance and painting can be said to be the outcome of several lines. In India whatever we have is Rekha (lines) Chitra. Our painters did not think of three-dimensional figures on the canvas. Music is a combination of unseen lines and the lines of dance spring forth from human body. The lines are designs and patterns, which in the long run resemble those of Alpana designs. The dance movements, if drawn on a piece of paper or on canvas, will turn out, curiously enough, into Alpana sketches.

The gigantic structure of Indian music is based on only seven notes—Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha and Ni. The foundation of Indian dance is also on seven parts of the human limb, or more precisely speaking, seven joints of the body. The body, with hands outstretched, is composed of two lines. Both the hands outstretched make a line parallel to the ground, and body from head to foot, if stood erect, make a line perpendicular to the ground. The harmony between this parallel line and the perpendicular line is Indian dance Now, curves are made from the joints. Take first the outstretched

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hands. The right hand has seven joints and so the left, counting from the tip of the finger which is to be taken as Sa, the three knuckles, in their turn, are Re, Ga and Ma, the wrist being Pa, and the elbow and shoulder, Dha and Ni respectively. Similarly, we have the same series in the other hand.

Now in the perpendicular line neck is Sa, shoulders—Re, waist—Ga, Hips—Ma, Knee—Pa, heel—Dha and toe—Ni. Numerous movements come from bending these joints according to the desire of the artiste forming into beautiful dance compositions.

Colour transforms drawing into painting. When sound is coloured it becomes music and when ordinary movement receives the artistic touch of an artist it changes into graceful dance.

Another interesting feature is that the dancer creates lines and transports them to the spectators. These lines are nothing but designs and patterns commonly known in India as 'Alpana' designs. The classical and folk-dancers in India also create arabesques and designs on the floor by changing their groupings of performers. Choreography is not foreign to India, but here the dancers, especially the folk-dancers are masters of that art. They make designs of innumerable kinds of Indian flowers by moving the dancers in inter-weaving rows, and with their magnificent and gorgeous dresses they create always kaleidoscopic patterns endlessly new and charming.

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PART I

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

History of Dance

☐

Dance of Krishna

☐

Ancient Dance Classifications

☐

Rasa and Bhava

☐

Gestures and Postures

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HISTORY OF DANCE

DANCE is the rhythmic physical movement prompted by feelings and emotions. The rhythmic movement may be of any or all parts of the body in accordance with some scheme. Rhythmical movement is spontaneous in many animals and human beings. The peacock dances to the clouds, birds dance in a group, elephant dances in the jungle to please his mate, so the bear and the snake dance to music, or the latter when fascinating its prey; a "dance macabre". Every beast and human being dances to express its innermost passions. All these are simple rhythmic movements without any scheme and may be classed as a natural outburst of dance instinct. We are aware of the dances of the savages and aboriginal tribes in different parts of the world. They dance the war dance, the dance of joy and energy and also the dance of nature to propitiate the divinities in the sun, the water, the wind and also to be helped by the celestial bodies for the progress and growth of their crops. Funeral dances are still performed by Negroes, Eskimos and the aborigines of South America.

Records of the most ancient astronomical dance to inspire a feeling of harmony of the revolutions of planets with their influence on human life can still be found in Egypt. The Egyptian priests danced round an altar regarded as the Sun in the cult of Isis, and also round the bull Apis, symbol of life-giving principle. They were so advanced at that time that they formed their own orchesography and invented notations to indicate their dances. Due to evolutionary civilizational processes we do not find people in modern societies dancing a savage dance to give vent to their feelings and emotions, but dancing is now-a-days practised as a social pastime.

There are three essential features in a dance. One, a spontaneous movement of the muscles and limbs under the influence of some strong emotion, feeling or passion, such as joy, pleasure, anger or religious exaltation; Two, pleasure derived both by the dancer and the spectator due to a definite combination of such graceful movements; And, Three, the vivid representation of emotions in other people watching the dancer, due to such carefully trained movements.

The date of reformed and polished dance in the history of India is rather controversial. Dance as an art came into existence with the growth of human society and civilisation. It is also debatable, which of the countries

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of the world was the most civilised and was the first to obtain this exalted position. But undoubtedly Indian civilisation is very old and ancient if not the oldest. Hindu civilisation can easily be dated before the creation of *Rig Veda*. The historians are of opinion that the *Rig Veda* was composed before 1500 B.C. Mention has been made of dance and musical instruments such as Mridanga, Vina, Bansi, Damaru, etc. in *Rig Veda*. In Sayan's commentary of *Rig Veda* we find these renderings: *Nrityamano Amritah* (*Rig*. 5-33-6) for dancing gods, or *Jagama Nrityatey* (*Rig*. 10-8-3), *Nartanaya Karmani Gatra Vikshepaya* and *Nritava*, bodily movements in order to dance, (*Rig*. 8-20-22), *Nrityanta* for when dancing. It would not be wrong to conjecture that during *Rig Veda* period dance was not practised as an art but only as an outburst of emotion.

We find a detailed account of the codification of this art in several old Sanskrit books which may be named according to the priority of the period as they had been written; Nandikeshwara's *Abhinaya Darpana*, Bharata's *Natya Shastra*, *Sangit Ratnakara*, Dhananjaya's *Dasharupa*, etc. All these books give more or less the same account of the origin of *Sangita* as will be found from the following translations of the Shlokas.

Abhinaya Darpana: In the beginning Bramha gave the *Natya Veda* to Bharata. Bharata together with groups of Gandharvas and Apsaras performed *natya*, *nritta* and *nritya* before Shiva. Then Shiva having remembered his own majestic performance (dance) caused Bharata to be instructed in that (art) by his attendants (ganas). And before this on account of his love for Bharata he gave to the latter instructions in 'Lasya' through Parvati. Having learnt Tandava (dance) from Tandu sages spoke of it to mortals. Parvati on the other hand instructed Usa, the daughter of Bana in Lasya (dance). The latter taught (the art) to the milk-maids of Dwarika, and they taught this to women of Saurashtra, who (in their turn) taught it to women of other countries. In this manner this (art) was traditionally handed down, and has come to stay in the world.

Natya Shastra: Bharata having got the knowledge of *Natya Shastra* from Bramha showed it to Trinetra (Shiva), who called Tandu and gave Bharata further instructions.

Raja Sourindra Mohan Tagore quotes: "Then Bramha evolved the fifth *Veda* out of the four existing *Vedas* which was originally practised by Indra. Bramha gave its name as '*Natya Veda*' and instructed Bharata who gave performance before Shambhu or Shiva."

Accounts of Hindu dancing gods and goddesses, Gandharvas and Apsaras are met with generally in Hindu mythology and old frescoes and statues of beautiful dancing poses are still in existence in abundance both in and out of India. Thus we find that Indra had both male and female artistes in his court.[1]

Male Artistes: Tamburu, Bhimsen, Ugrasen, Urnayu, Anagh, Gopati, Dhritarashtra, Suryabarcha, Yugap, Trinap, Karshni, Nandi, Chitraratha, Salishira, Paryanna, Kali, Narada, Sadhdha, Brihadhdha, Brihak, Mahamana, Karal, Brahmachari, Bahuguna, Suvarna, Viswabasu, Sumanyu,

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Suchandra, Sharu, Haha and Huhu. Female artistes: Anuchana, Anavadya, Gunamukhya, Gunavara, Adrika, Soma, Mishrakeshi, Alambusha, Marichi, Shuchika, Vidyutparna, Tilottama, Ambika, Lakshana, Khema, Devi, Rambha, Manorama, Asita, Subahu, Supriya, Subapu, Pundarika, Sugandha, Surasa, Pramarthini, Kamya, Sharadwati, Menaka, Sahajanya, Karnika, Punjikasthala, Ritusthala, Ghritachi, Vishwachi, Purvachitti, Umlocha, Pramlocha, and Urvashi. They all danced and the last eleven also acted in the opera and the chorus.

Shiva the cosmic dancer

Shiva is the first dancer according to Hindu conception. "A great motif in religion or art, any great symbol becomes all things to all men; age after age, it yields to men such treasure as they find in their own hearts," (A.K. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*, p. 56) and so Shiva's dance as handed down to the Hindus is something excellent and supremely-beautiful.

The images of Shiva are divided into four classes, (1) The Samhara Murty (destructive aspect), (2) Dakshina Murty (Yogic aspect), (3) Anugraha Murty (boon-giving aspect), and Nritta Murty (dancing aspect). It has been attributed by some that Nataraja (Shiva) gave expositions of one hundred and eight modes of dances covering the Angika, Vachika, Aharya and Sattwika. His gestures are the world processes, his speech is the entire language and his costume is the moon and the stars. We bow to that Sattwika Shiva (Sattwika to be explained later). The final is the depiction of *Sattwa Guna* which is the highest of the qualities. He is the embodiment of music also, specially of Tala or timing in music.

His name 'Nataraja' means the king of actors and dancers. In Uttar Pradesh developed the idea of Shiva as a Yogi and philosopher, in Bengal Shiva as destroyer and in Southern India Shiva as Nataraja. The colour of Nataraja is white. According to existing literature we come across Shiva's dance in seven different forms: (i) Ananda Tandava or the joyous dance, (ii) Sandhya Tandava is the evening, (iii) Kalika Tandava is the slaying of demons of evil and ignorance, (iv) Tripura Tandava is the slaying of demon Tripura, (v) Samhara Tandava is the dance of destruction. There are two other dances which are not the solo ones of Shiva but with his consort Parvati. These are (vi) Gauri Tandava dance with Gauri and (vii) Uma Tandava dance with Uma.

Shiva Pradosha Stotra narrates the Sandhya Tandava as follows: "Placing the mother of the three worlds upon a golden throne, studded with precious gems, Shulapani dances on the heights of Kailasa, and all the gods gather round Him. Saraswati plays on the Vina, Indra on the flute, Bramha holds the time marking cymbals, Lakshmi begins a song, Vishnu plays on a drum and all the gods stand round about: Gandharvas, Yakshas, Patagas, Uragas, Sidhdhas, Sadhyas, Vidyadharas, Amaras, Apsarasas, and all the beings dwelling in the three worlds assemble there to witness the celestial dance and hear the music of the divine choir at the

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hour of twilight (*Sandhya*).

In the picture of Sandhya Tandava, with which the Hindus are very familiar, Shiva is two-handed and the co-operation of the gods is in a position of a chorus. There is no demon trampled under Shiva's foot.

The Tandava dance of Shiva with Gauri or Uma belongs to His Tamasic aspect as Bhairava or Vir Bhadra. It is performed in cemeteries and burning grounds, where Shiva is ten-armed and both Shiva and Uma are accompanied by troops of capering imps. This dance sometimes of Shiva and others of Parvati is interpreted in Saiva and Sakta literature in a profound sense.

Shiva does not merely destroy the heavens and earth at the close of a world cycle, but the fetters that bind each separate soul. The burning ground is not the place where our earthly bodies are cremated but the hearts of His lovers and worshippers laid waste and desolate. The place where the Ego is destroyed signifies the state where illusion and deeds are burnt away that is the crematorium where Nataraja dances.

The Nadanta dance of Nataraja before the Sabha in the golden hall of Chidambaram or Tillai, the centre of the Universe, first revealed to gods and Rishis after the submission of the latter in the forest of Taragam, is related by Havell as follows: "Once upon a time Shiva disguised as a Yogi, came to a forest hermitage to hold debate with certain Rishis who held heretical doctrines. He easily defeated them in argument and they in a rage tried to destroy him by black magic, first by creating a fierce tiger in the sacrificial fire. Shiva seized it in its spring, stripped off its skin with the nail of his little finger and wrapped it as a garment about his loins. Then they created a venomous serpent which Shiva took and wreathed as a garland round his neck and began to dance. Next an evil spirit shaped like an ugly dwarf rushed out of the fire. But Shiva crushed it under his foot, broke its back and then resumed his triumphant dance, the dance of the cosmic rhythm with all of the Devas and all of Rishis as witnesses." A similar story is elsewhere related about an elephant; and these legends account for the elephant or tiger skin, which Shiva wears. It is what is known as Gajasurabadha.

A legend says that once there was a dispute between Shiva and Kali as who was the better dancer. Shiva danced and Kali successfully followed him. On perceiving that he would be defeated, Shiva lifted one of his legs on the top of his crown and began dancing. Kali's feminine modesty stopped her from following her husband in that, so Shiva was acknowledged as the champion dancer by the gods. This particular dance was known as 'Urdhava Tandava'.

There is also the dual aspect of Mahadeva. Mahadeva's half is Uma and he is known as Ardhanarishwara. He is four-armed in this image.

Now to summarise the whole interpretation we find the essential significance of Shiva's dance is threefold: first, it is the image of his rhythmic play as the source of all movement within the cosmos, which is represented by the arch; second, the purpose of his dance is to release the

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countless souls of men from the snare of illusion; third, the place of the dance Chidambaram, the centre of the Universe, is within the heart.

The entire conception of Shiva's dance can be attributed to the Shaivites of South India concentrating upon the image of Nataraja at Chidambaram and most of the literature on Shiva's dance that we come across is in their own language, but the whole idea is confined in one single Sanskrit *Stotra* attributed to Ravana.[2]

Shiva's dance is Tandava, energetic and virile. The dance represents the God's five activities, Panchakritya viz., (1) the creation and evolution (Shrishti), (2) maintenance and preservation (Sthiti), (3) destruction and involution (Samhara), drawing again into his own self, (4) embodiment of souls (Tirobhava) and (5) their release from the cycle (Anugraha). These separately considered are the activities of the deities, Bramha, Vishnu, Rudra, Maheshwara and Sadashiva.

The Damaru or drum in his upper right hand stands for creative sound, the fire in the upper left hand for destruction, the 'pataka' hand which is the lower right is for victory and the lower left hand which depicts the pose of Abhaya Mudra is for boon, peace, contentment and maintenance. The foot held aloft gives release. The cosmic process of creation and destruction, manifestation and non-manifestation, the worldly evolution and change are fundamental concepts in Hindu theology and Shiva's dance is the depiction of the same.

In this symbolic dance the five activities mentioned above are represented. The first movement is that of Creation. Shiva danced and the very first rhythm of his dance produced this Universe. The second rhythm is that of Preservation. By its rhythm the equilibrium of the Universe is preserved. The third one is that of Destruction. By its rhythm, the living are destroyed and things yet unborn are made to appear. The fourth movement is that of Embodiment. The rhythm produced by this movement embodies in itself things Real and Unreal (like illusions), things of past, present and future. The fifth and last one is that of Release. The rhythm produced here is just opposite to the one produced by the first movement. It enables living things to attain complete salvation or Nirvana.

"The Nataraja type is one of the great creations of Indian art . . . The movement of the dancing figure is so admirably balanced that while it fills all space, it seems nevertheless to be at rest."[3] The grandeur of the conception of Shiva as a cosmic dancer is a synthesis of science, religion and art. The ancient artists and Rishis whose conception is this aesthetical and beautiful imagination of a dancing deity can be placed as the greatest artists. The philosopher, the lover and the artist of all ages and climes can find the highest and sublimest food from this conception.

Dance of Kali

Kali is the consort of Shiva and possesses many names of which Parvati is one. Her dancing achievements as Parvati have been enumerated above.

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In a picture Kali is always seen dancing on the prostrate body of her husband with long and flowing hair and red protruding tongue, a garland of human heads dripping blood hung round her neck and an apron of human heads wrapped round her waist. None can explain this dance of Kali better than Sir John Woodroffe, the reputed author of many works on Tantra: "The scene of the dance is the cremation ground, amidst white sun-dried bones and fragments of flesh, gnawed and pecked at by carrion beasts and birds. He, the heroic worshipper (viz., Sadhaka) performs at dead of night his awe-inspiring rituals. Kali is set on such a scene, for She is that aspect of the Great Power which withdraws all things unto Herself at and by the dissolution of the Universe. He alone worships without fear who has abandoned all worldly desires and seeks union with her as the one Blissful and Perfect Experience. On the burning ground all the desires are burnt away. She is naked and dark like a threatening rain-cloud, for She who is herself beyond mind and speech, reduces all living things into that worldly nothingness which, as the void (Shunya) of all which we know, is at the same time. The All (Purna) which is light and Peace. She is naked being clothed in space alone (Digambara) because Great Power is unlimited. Further, she is herself beyond 'Maya', that power of Herself with which she creates all Universe She stands upon the white corpse-like (Shavarupa) body of Shiva. He is white, because He is the illuminating (Prakasha), the transcendental aspect of Consciousness. He is inert because He is the Changeless aspect of the Supreme and She is apparently the Changing aspect of the same, being Twin aspects of the One who is Changeless and exists as Change."

The pre-Aryan God and his consort who dwelt on mount Kailasa have evidently been merged into Shiva and Parvati of the Tantrik literature. Parvati has multifarious manifestations as Kali, Tara, Dhumawati, Dakini or Chhinnamaata etc., and has always been described as one or other dancing aspects. Shiva has also been described as dancing sometimes on the burning ground or in company with his Ganas or Parvati or before Parvati. In Shiva's dance we come across the Raudra Rasa but very seldom the Bibhatsa Rasa. But in Kalika dance in many instances the Bibhatsa prevails. In the Tamil literature of South India we find much prominence has been given to Shiva as Nataraja, and Chidambaram has been given a very high place as a sacred Tirtha. It is very difficult at this distant time to fix exactly whether the Shaiva cult existed in South India prior to the Shakti cult of the Northern India or the introduction of the Tantras. If a careful deduction is drawn from the existing Sanskrit texts, it is very probable, nay, almost certain that the Shaiva cult was introduced in South India after the spread of the Tantrik religion in Northern India and as is natural with the dogma of every religion, the Shaivites attributed higher position to Mahadeva as Nataraja.

The Bibhatsa (hideous) aspect of Kali's dance is well described in the Dhumawati Stotram as follows: "She who is slim in body draws in the contents of Asura's head in her capacious mouth and chews the bones with

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a vigorous sound and keeps on dancing to the sound of Damaru and anklets. With all sorts of grimaces she puts her hand into the intestine of Asura and laughs a shrill laugh."[4]

Even after this horrible aspect the Bhaktas (devotees) have described the Devi (goddess) as follows: "The Sadhaka says that in this destructive aspect 'O, *Bhadra-kali*, give me bliss."'[5]

Contrary to the above dancing aspects She is also described as dancing the Shanta Rasa and in many instances as a superb dancer and as a Mahabhramari. She dances at the beginning of a drama to the plaintive rhythmical and slow accompaniment of Mridanga where Tals are uttered by the consorts and daughters of the Devatas and Turaga sings a soul-arresting song. There is a vigorous applause of "*Jai, Jai*" which pervades through the Universe and the sound of Her Nupura (anklets) charms the Lord of the Universe. She also takes part in the drama by singing her sweet songs.[6]

The conception of Kali is peculiar to Bengal and the Bengali poets Ram Prasad and others often sing 'Shyama' songs and depict her as a great dancer. They compare the burning ground to the human heart in which the deity dances Her eternal dance, where the heart has become the burning ground by means of renunciation. Shiva is known as "*Sudalaiyadi*" and the same name can also be ascribed to Kali. Originally, Kali's dance must have been orgiastic, which is later interpreted in a philosophical and mystical sense. In Bengal the mother rather than the father form of Shiva is adored. In the Kali cult, Kali is regarded as the supreme dancer, superior to Shiva. Shiva here does not dance. He is only a witness, who acknowledges Kali's supremacy and power and is at the feet of Kali.

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DANCE OF KRISHNA

WE are familiar with the dances of Krishna, the cowherd incarnation of Vishnu, but in his aspect of Vishnu we do not find dancing poses. In Northern India, the most popular dance of Lord Krishna is the dance of his childhood with butter pots and milk-maids and the dance of his youth is known as Rasa Lila. He is noted for his spiritual love dance with Gopinis or milkmaids by the bank of Yamuna in moonlit nights or with Radha under the Kadamba tree.

The best literature of Krishna as a dancing God can be had from Bengal. Krishna Lila's conception sprang from this state and the place for Krishna's activity was held to be at Mathura and Brindaban. In Bengal Lord Krishna is always depicted in dancing pose with the divine flute in his hand. Bengali Bhaktas of Radha and Krishna went singing to the different parts of India and thus spread the Krishna cult. The Vaishnavas of Bengal make Krishna and Radha dance and they themselves also dance when singing Kirtan or melodious love songs of Krishna and Radha. Poets like Vidyapati, Chandidas, Jayadeva and Mirabai have sung Krishna's unforgettable adulations with ecstasy.

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In the eyes of the devout Hindu Radha and Krishna are inseparable either in their separate identity or merged into one. The great exponent of Vaishnava cult, Shri Chaitanya always conceived Radha and Krishna merged into one in his own heart and himself felt the pleasure and pain which Radha felt due to the love or rejection of Shri Krishna or vice versa. That is why we come across the name Jugalkishore. Krishna has been described as wearing a peacock's feather on his headgear (Supichcha Guchcha Mastakam), a divine flute in his hand (Sunada Venu Hastakam), and the ocean of love (Ananga Ranga Sagaram). We refrain from quoting any of the innumerable soul-stirring verses sung in praise of Lord Krishna but a perusal of any Vaishnavite literature will amply testify to the great beauty and sweetness of the so-called amours.

Shiva is serious and Krishna is full of pathos and love. Krishna is known as Natwar as Shiva is Nataraja. At the time of Holi festival even now at Mathura the women and men dance. At Barsana women and men of Nandgaon dance and stage a sham fight and also the Jats indulge in a more elaborated dancing performance at Kosi. According to Agamic teaching Shiva is known as Pashupati or Lord of animals. The men are Pashus or animals and Shiva is their Creator. Man's body is unconscious but his soul is conscious. Pashu is the abode of eternal and omnipresent Chitshakti—mind or energy. *Pashu* is bound and limited by *Pasha* or bond which is *Maya Pasha* or the material cause of the world which hinders a man's progress to Salvation. The bond is threefold, *Agyana*, Ignorance and *Karma. Pashu* is finite, the soul is led to liberation by *Shakti.*

In Krishna cult the idea of love is brought into prominence and it is regarded as the path of devotion. In Shaivism there is supremacy of intellect, in Vaishnavism emotion, particularly Shringara Rasa is brought into light. Shiva represents the supremacy of the intellect over the heart and Krishna that of heart over the head. Humanity itself is divided into these two groups. Shiva is adored in the temple but Krishna appears as *sakha* (friend) to His devotee, or lover or a child and that is why during a hundred years' separation of Sri Krishna from the people of Brindaban time had no consequence.

With Krishna's dance we really come to the dances of our own days. Every gesture, posture and movement of limbs and body of dancing men and women of India today, represents some Radha-Krishna episode. The ancient tales of the love of Krishna and Radha are as alive today as they were a thousand years ago, and the incidents still awaken a breathless interest in the devotees.

In Northern India Krishna and Radha's dance is so familiar that even in nursery rhymes mention of it is made. A song is not perfect if it does not speak about the dance of Radha-Krishna. South India is not such a devout follower of Krishna, although in the South we still have the pot-dance (Kuda-kuttu) which is a folk-dance and whose origin can be traced to the dance performed by Krishna after his victory over Banasura. Another dance of Krishna's victory which is connected with the defeat of

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the poisonous snake Kaliya (*Kaliya Daman*) is also prevalent in South India.

The following quotation from Mehta's *Gujarati Painting in the Fifteenth Century* (p. 2), will be found interesting: "Radha was the new divinity which was thrown up at the end of the mediaeval period, through her illicit amours—literally or symbolically interpreted according to the aptitude, age, temperament and meanings of the devotees—were expressed, and in a way satisfied the trembling desires and the innermost aspirations of the multitude . . ." But in the eyes of the devout Hindu, the love of Radha is no longer illicit amour. In India the girls in their private gardens or in village school gardens still perform the Rasa as did the milkmaids of Brindaban in Krishna's time. The Rasa Krida of Radha and Gopis represents the eternal longing of the individual soul (*jibatma*) to mingle with the divine soul (*paramatma*) represented by Krishna.

Dance of Ganesha

It is a well-known fact and there are paintings on the subject that Shiva performed an evening dance on the mount of Kailasa before the assembled gods and goddesses and his son Ganesha, the elephant-headed deity, joined him in this evening dance. He is also portrayed in sculpture as dancing. In some of the hymns Ganesha has been sung as *Vilasa Chaturam*, but we do not come across any legend where Ganesha had actually danced.

Dance of other Deities

In *Bhagwad Gita*, which is held to be the most sacred scripture amongst the Hindus, Krishna in his dialogue with Arjuna states that dancing is the chief activity of all the gods. In the Buddhistic art there are numerous sculptures of dancing goddesses representing Kali and Parvati in a general way. Dances of victory are attributed in the Silapadigram to Subramanya, the God of War. The legend says and according to the commentator Adiyarkunallai, Subramanya having slain the Surapadmasura, danced the dance of triumph. The ocean was his stage, and the waves the platform, the accompaniment was the rattle of his drum. Kartikeya dance is another example and also that of Shakti of Kartikeya. Mention has been made of Vishnu dancing in the disguise of a woman (*Mohini*), at the time when the ocean was being churned to raise *amrita* (nectar) for the gods, but there is no dancing image in his original form. Then again, we come across the references of the dance of Indra, but unfortunately the statue of dancing Indra is not generally seen in the museums.

Ritualistic dances

Ritualistic dances are mentioned in the Vedas and the Puranas. In the Mahavrata ceremony women dance round the fire having pitchers full of

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water on their head and pour it on the sacrificial fire. The *stotra* is being sung. This signifies that they want rain and desire richness in milk and crops. At the end of *ashwamedha yajna*, the women dance round the sacrificial fire to endow the sacrificers with might. They give beating with their feet on the ground and sing "This is honey" (*idam amritam*).

Dance of Apsaras

Artists have painted copiously and poets have sung about the beauties of the Apsaras. It is noteworthy that Gandharvas are of the male sex and Apsaras are females. Donald A. Mackenzie in his *Indian Myth and Legend* writes: "The Gandharvas are renowned musicians and bards and singers. When they play on the divine instruments the fairy-like Apsaras, who are all females, dance merrily . . . The Apsaras or dancing girls are 'voluptuous and beautiful', and inspire love in Paradise as well as upon earth. Their lovers include Gods, Gandharvas and mortals. Arjuna, the human son of Indra, who was transported in a celestial chariot to *Swarga* over *Suravithi* or *Chaya Patha*, 'the milky way' was enchanted by the music and songs and dances of the celestial elves and fairies. He followed bands of *Gandharvas* who were 'skilled in music, sacred and profane', and he saw the bewitching Apsaras including the notorious Menaka, 'with eyes like lotus blooms employed in enticing hearts', they had 'fair round hips and slim waists', and began to perform various evolutions, shaking their deep bosoms and casting their glances around, and exhibiting other attitudes capable of stealing the hearts, resolutions and minds of the spectators."[7] In the *Ramayana* we find the story of Ravana assaulting Rambha, one of the main Apsaras. Shakuntala was born of Menaka and her paternity is attributed to Vishwamitra. There are various other instances.

There is a belief that Apsaras sprang up from the ocean at the time of *Samudra Manthan*, when it was churned by gods and demons. There came out the joys of dance and song and up sprang the Apsaras or the nymphs of heaven of surprising loveliness, endowed with beauty and gracefulness. In the eloquent words of Griffiths, "The supple wrists, palms and fingers of these beautiful women beseech, explain, deprecate and caress." The depiction of these is the aim of the Hindu dance. According to another legend mentioned in the *Bharata Natya Shastra*, Apsaras were created by Brahma when difficulty was felt for the execution of certain type of dances which could only be performed by women and not by men.

Works on Art

Now, we have an idea of the mythological dances of the gods and goddesses from the above accounts, but there is no authenticity of these except in the old religious books. They are mythical and legendary. We do not find any codified work on dancing pertaining to the *Vedic* age. The earliest work on this subject is *Natasutra* by Silalin and Krisaswa (c. 500

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B.C.), but the contents of that book are not known, and it is conjectured that the book contained an account of gestures and postures and the methods to be adopted by the dancers. The next work is probably Nandikeshwara's *Bharatarnava* of which only the name is known. Next comes *Abhinaya Darpana*. Some are of opinion that *Abhinaya Darpana* is an abridgement of *Bharatarnava*. *Bharata-Natya-Shastra* has been said to be the earliest work, and though Manmohan Ghosh discusses in detail the dates of *Bharata-Natya-Shastra* and *Abhinaya Darpana* he is unable to come to a definite conclusion. However, both the books are of great antiquity, there dates ranging somewhere between 2nd and 5th century A.D. (earliest and latest). Some hold Bharata Muni as having a dubious existence. It is immaterial whether Bharata Muni existed or not, but the book *Bharata-Natya-Shastra* still exists in a more or less complete form and its date has been critically examined to be within hundred years (earlier or later) of the writing of *Abhinaya Darpana* by Nandikeshwara, about whose existence the same remark can be passed. Then come *Agnipurana* and *Vishnu-dharmottara* which treat with *Abhinaya* or dancing. Their dates are not yet critically examined but *Vishnudharmottara* belongs to a period not later than 500 A.D. (*Indian Antiquary*, XIX, p. 408; Jolly, *Hindu Law and Customs*, p. 65) and *Agnipurana* has been fixed for the latter half of the 8th century.

An account of the *Lingapurana* shows that Nandikeshwara, the composer of *Abhinaya Darpana*, was the chief "Gana" or attendant of Shiva and was immortalised by him. He was the son of a blind woman named Silada who prayed to gods for a son and Shiva gave her this very son. He is the same Nandi, one of the two attendants, Nandi and Bhringi. Ram Krishna Kavi identifies Nandin or Nandikeshwara with Tandu. There is a *pauranic* story that once Indra came to teach the art of Abhinaya, so that he could easily gain victory over Natashekhara, a demon dancer. Indra was advised to listen to the four thousand verses of *Bharatarnava* of Nandikeshwara which frightened him and he begged him to relate the entire law of dancing in a concise form. Nandikeshwara was sympathetic to his distinguished royal disciple and taught the *Abhinaya Darpana* which is a concise work of *Bharatarnava*. After all, the stories regarding Nandikeshwara and Bharata are valueless, but it is obvious that they were mortal beings and compiled works on drama, dance and music.

We come to two other authentic works, *Sangita Ratnakara* and Dhananjaya's *Dasharupa*. Both these books are not original works but compilation from various sources, the main being *Abhinaya Darpana* and *Natya Shastra*. They have quoted sometimes the entire slokas, though the treatment of gestures etc., is more elaborately done. Although there was a bold change introduced by Kalidasa in the style of writing dramas, yet he did not lay down any definite rules for special actions of Anga, Pratyanga and Upanga in expressing special moods in a dance which were however done by some of his commentators, such as Raghabhabatta, etc. In the poet's *Malavikagnimitra*, Malavika dances (Act II) "*Iti Yatharasam Abhinayati*", she gestures in accordance with the flavour or sentiment. This

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means that it was not incumbent on the dancer to bring out a pitcher and fill it with water to show that particular action or to have a garden scene to show the action of plucking flowers. These were all done by codified gestures.

We are now in a position to form an idea of India's civilization and culture towards fine arts at this remote stage when the sages codified the principles and made rules and regulations of cultural arts of dancing, drama and music in a systematic way.

In the Buddhist and epic period dance became a normal court function which was demonstrated in courts to pay homage to the kings or to the honoured guests. As there were Gandharvas and Apsaras in the court of Indra in heaven who used to please the gods and saints by means of their art, so on the earth there were troupes of dancers in the royal courts who were patronised by the kings. At that time it was also a part of education and accomplishment for the girls of Royal and other aristocratic families to be well versed in the art of dancing. We hear of the seduction of Gautama Buddha by the daughters of Mara who danced before him.

Coomaraswamy gives a set of examples of the ancient kings who took dancing as an accomplishment and they are as follows. "In the *Devyavadana* (Cowell and Neill, p. 544 et seq.) King Rudrayana plays the flute (*vina*), while his wife Chandravati dances; the Gupta Emperor Samudragupta had coins struck in which he is represented as seated and playing on the lyre or lute, while an inscription of the same great monarch at Allahabad records his skill in music. Kalidasa represents King Agnivarman as competing with actors in their art. In Devendra's *Uttaradhyana Tika* (Meyer, *Hindu Tales*, p. 105) King Udava plays on the lute while his wife dances, but drops the plectrum of the lute, at which queen is angered and asks: Why have you spoilt the dance? In the *Mahavamsa*, (Ch. LXIII, V. 82, 83), Parakrama Bahu I (of Ceylon) is said to have built a theatre beside his palace "so that he might listen to the singers, and witness the delightful dance," while his queen *Rupavati*, who was young and beautiful, and an embodiment of all traditional virtues of a Hindu wife "was skilled in dancing and was richly endowed with a mind as keen as the point of a blade of grass."

Next we come to dance as a religious office which is more interesting and important than the former one. Dance was then used to please the gods in temples and shrines. The dance performed in temples had a religious sentiment in it and was spiritual. Here we get an account of Devadasis (maid-servants of the gods) who were permanently attached to the *Mandir* and there are such Devadasis still existing in South India. From generation to generation, this is their profession and a daughter of a Devadasi must become Devadasi. They used to play in the religious dramas staged in the temples. Reference is made in the inscriptions of Rajaraja and other Chola kings in the Tanjore district, in the eleventh century, of theatres and dancers in shrines. History speaks of Koluttunga III who appointed dancing masters in the temple to give lessons in gestures.

"In India dance is a religion. Dancers are connected with the temples

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in India and are known as the servants of God because they sing and dance before the idols."[8] From the temple of Jagannath at Puri and in almost all the principal temples of Southern India Devadasis are found, though the system was abolished in Madras Presidency by a provincial legislation under the British rule.[9] In ancient Egypt, Greece, Phoenicia and other western countries, there were such female dencers in temples. In the western countries of Asia and in the temple of Venus in Greece, there were female dancers. Most authorities are of opinion that dance as an expressive art had its inception in Egypt. There are fragments of Egyptian frescoes on exhibition in the British museum that show dancing figures.[10] But even then there are divergences of opinion.

A legend says that the Jains and the Buddhists had come to terms with God in regard to the introduction of dancing girls into their austere religion. The pillars of the temple of Sittanavasal are adorned with the figures of dancing girls.

A proper occasion for dance was, in a later stage, the conquest or occupation of towns. When a king conquered a town or when a party migrated from one place to another, dance performances were given. Dance was also exhibited in the procession of men and gods. At a still later stage it was performed on several social occasions and was regarded as a social ceremony, such as, birth of a child, wedding, reunion of friends, festivals, celebrations and other auspicious events.

We find from documentary evidences that the Sangita Shastra of India in which are included dancing, acting, singing etc., reached its height sometimes in first or second century A.D. and remained so for nearly one thousand years. As is natural, this art attained an old age after this long period and its decline was inevitable. Then started outside invasions and the kings and other chiefs who were the patrons of the art became busy in self-defence and territorial defence and other internal strifes. The political conditions of the country did not improve after this, but worsened. The invaders from the North-West were mostly with different backgrounds, people whose religion forbade participation in pastimes having a touch of idolatry and the consequence was that the decline was very rapid and the art became confined to a lower class of people who had no idea of aesthetics. Thus we find, during the Muhammedan period the aesthetic and spiritual elements of the Hindu dance declined with the introduction of *nicha* or *kulata nritya*. There is no authentic book of this period and in the Muslim age on account of the observance of 'purdah' dancing by women of upper class families was altogether lost in oblivion.

South India retained its dance to some extent, because Muhammedan influence was not powerful there. Bengal also had this influence but not to such an extent as Northern India. Bengal has even now retained some of her ancient dances and pantomimes in the shape of folk dancing. In this period, the Hindu dance was performed before the Moghul and Afghan chiefs and nobles to please them and to gain their favour. The dance lost its high emotions and ventured to express the lower, common sentiments and

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emotions of passions. The aristocrats and nobles gradually and naturally forgot the art. The ladies and womenfolk at large did not dance, so much so that dancing was looked down upon in the higher circles and was restricted among professional women. It was their monopoly. Their temperament and ideas were in vogue and were predominant up to the end of the nineteenth century.

ANCIENT DANCE: CLASSIFICATIONS

WE have to bring out clearly the meaning of the three words *natya*, *nritta* and *nritya*. Dance and drama in India are inseparable. The word Natya, which is a synonym for a *rupa* or *drishya-kavya* and points to its lyrical nature, throws further light on the point in accordance with the etymological meaning of this word which is derived from the root *nat* (*nrit*) meaning to 'dance'. "Hindu plays are compositions in which rhythm and lyrical elements preponderate and action is given a minor scope;" (Levi, *Le Theatre Indian*, pp. 29-30. S. Rice, op cit., p. 89), but we cannot agree to Levi's viewpoint. In every country the conception of acted plays originated from dance displays. In ancient Rome the variety of theatrical representation had its origin in the pantomimic performances by means of dance, mimicry and music. Similarly, in ancient India the very first mention of the interpretation of a plot is by means of dancing and mimicry in which from all accounts speech and even song were absent. The *devas* had won a victory over the *danavas* and in order to celebrate the occasion they staged a play in the open-air where the warfare was shown by means of dance and mimicry. Mahadeva gave the best performance and showed the way to the *devas* as to how to do it. The *asuras* got annoyed due to this exhibition of their failure and complained to Brahma. The same words *Nata*, *Nati*, actor, actress, also designate dancer, danseuse; and a theatre (*natya-shala veshma*) is equally a dance stage.

The difference between *nritya* and *nritta* is not clearly brought out by Raja Sourindra Mohan Tagore. He says: "The ten kinds of art which teach various measured movements of the limbs and the trunk with *vilasa* together constitute *nritta* or dancing." According to him *nritta* without the dramatic element, is called *nritya* (simple dancing).

Manmohan Ghosh draws a clear distinction between the two. He says, that (dance) which does not express mood (*bhava*) by means of *abhinaya* is called *nritta* and that (dance) which suggests flavour (*rasa*) and mood (*bhava*) is called Nritya.[11] This dance is always fit to find a place in the court of great kings. Coomaraswamy is almost of the same opinion. "Nritya is dancing that expounds a theme by means of explicit gestures, Nritta is dancing to music, but without a definite theme." Dasharupa also bears the same definitions.[12] The distinction made by *Abhinaya Darpana* between

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nritta and *nritya* is not observed by *Natya Shastra*. This probably shows that the two works follow two divergent traditions.

Natya and Abhinaya are more or less the same thing and Dr Tagore says, "Our very word for drama or play—'Nataka' or 'Abhinaya'—shows that dance was its essential feature." There are four kinds of Abhinaya; Angika (of limbs), Vachika (of speech), Aharya (of costumes etc.) and Sattwika.

(i) *Angika*: It is named as such because it is expressed in three ways by *anga*, *pratyanga* and *upanga*.

(ii) *Anga:* The six, such as, head, hands, chest, sides (flanks), waist (hips) and feet are called *angas*. Many include neck also among these.

(iii) *Pratyanga*: The six, such as, shoulder-blades, arms, back, belly, thighs (calves) and shanks. Many add three more—wrists, elbows and knees combined, and neck.

(iv) *Upanga*: Scholars class shoulder as *upanga* and according to *Abhinaya Darpana*, eyes, eye-brows, eyeballs, cheeks, nose, jaw, lips, teeth, tongue, chin, and face are also called *upangas*. Thus, *upangas* in the head are twelve. In other limbs there are ankles, toes and fingers. *Upanga* as mentioned in the *Natya Shastra* are only six.

The *angas*, *pratyangas* and *upangas* are to be used in every dance. When an *anga* (major limb) moves, the *pratyanga* and *upanga* also move.

(v) *Vachika*: By words.

(vi) *Aharya*: Dress and the appearance of actors. Costume is a very essential feature of a dance and care had been taken to have becoming costume for every character taking part in the display.

(vii) *Sattwika*: This is the representation of eight psychic conditions arising from the vital principle itself. These eight conditions are, motionlessness, perspiration, horripilation, change of voice, trembling, change of colour, tears and fainting. But as these are sometimes to be expressed with the help of suitable gestures or movements of limbs, some modern scholars could, however, discover no distinction between *sattwika* and *angika ahbinayas*. But their confusion is due to overlooking the fact that while the *angika abhinaya* is mostly on external things and represents ideas, conveyed by words and intellectual changes in a man, the *sattwika abhinaya* is a thing expressing the psyche; because the eight conditions enumerated above proceed from the inmost recess of the soul and pervade the whole body. Owing to their distinctive and deep-seated nature, they (i.e., the eight conditions) form a separate branch of the Abhinaya. But in spite of this possible distinction it cannot be denied that the *sattwika abhinaya* has every chance of degenerating into the *angika abhinaya* when the *nata* lacks the genius as well as proper training in his art.

Nritya is of two kinds—*marga* and *desi*. Marga is composed of both music and dancing. It is said that it was performed by Bharata before Mahadeva, and previous to that it was sought by Brahma from Mahadeva. *Desi* is that which is in vogue amongst us, and which is performed before kings by men for their entertainment.

Nritya can be classified into two kinds—*tandava* and *lasya*. "Tandava",

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quotes Raja Sourindra Mohan Tagore, "accompanies Sarita having Dhruvas and other kinds of songs. It has various movements of the eyes, eye-brows and hands chiming in with the sentiment of love."[13] Having been first performed by Tandu, an attendant of Shiva, the dance is called Tandava. The *Lasya* dancing excites amour in the bosom of youth. According to *Narada Samhita*, *pun-nritya* (male-dancing), and *stri-nritya* (female-dancing) are generally known as *Tandava* and *Lasya*[14] respectively.

'Tandava' is of two kinds—*pebali* and *vahurupa*. Pebali consists of movements of the limbs alone and is bereft of any dramatic element. Vahurupa has dramatic elements such as frequently changing of dress. In Vahurupa, the dancer usually sings a 'Telena' song. Telena is a song which is composed of certain meaningless conventional words such as, Ta, Na, Dim, etc.

'Lasya' is divided into two parts—*Chhurita* and *Yauvata*. The dance of the hero and heroine in a presentation of exciting love, including sentiment, passion etc., bears the appellation of 'Sfurita' or 'Chhurita'. The extremely graceful dance of dancing girls, accompanied with various coquettish movements—the magic to charm and bewitch—is entitled 'Yauvata'.

Nritta is of three kinds—*Vishama*, *Vikata* and *Laghu*. Vishama consists of many acrobatic feats like that of rope dancing. Vikata consists of movements of a person in a dress which strikes awe and terror in the hearts of the beholders. Laghu dance constitutes graceful upward trippings and movements of like nature.

The following schools of dancing were prevalent in ancient India.

Karshni: The dance which was performed by eight milkmaids, around eight figures of Krishna, with auspicious words.

Jakkari: The dance which enthused women and men of Turkey bearing bouquets, performed in amorous mood, accompanied with nature songs.

Sabaras: The dance which the Sabaras perform with songs (Sabaras are mountaineers formerly found in the mountainous regions of Western India. The kind of dance mentioned here is still in vogue among the Santals and other people).

Kaurangi: The dance which men and women in Savari dresses, ornamented with *Gunja* berries, perform carolling native airs.

Mattavali: Is the dance performed by the drunken folks of Turkey.

The *Mirror of Gesture* describes in a passage quoted from somewhere (the author, A.K. Coomaraswamy does not mention the source), the vulgar dance (*nicha nritya*) as a dance begun without prayer etc., and opines that those who witness the vulgar dance will have no children and will be reborn in animal wombs.

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RASA AND BHAVA

INDIA developed as a means of literary criticism a theory of aesthetic experience (*Rasa*) of considerable importance in the history of aesthetics. A work of art is a statement informed by sentiment (Rasa). The origin of the idea of Rasa is from the idea of Bhava. Bhava is the concrete situation and condition for a period of time of some occurrence and Rasa is the aesthetic experience of that happening or condition. It is an abstract idea, the essence of a particular situation in a human mind formed with a psychological sense of aesthetic beauty. Every Bhava possesses its respective Rasa, e.g., we have Shringara Rasa, whose Bhava is *Rati* (pleasure, delight, satisfaction, joy, love, affection. *Sahitya Darpana* defines it "*Ratimanonukuleartha Manasah Pravanayita*". The sight of a happening e.g., a terrible occurrence, say, a man drinking another man's blood is Bhava (*Ghrina*) and the experience accruing from that is a sentiment or Rasa (Bibhatsa in the present example).

The art of the East is still based on its religious philosophy and in its idealism we find the key to the understanding of this art. For the original source of this idealism we should look much further back than the beginning of this art which we have already shown to date as far back as 2,000 years or more. The motive forces which are behind all art creation often exist "in full strength long before art finds concrete visible expression in lierature." The conception of this high ideal was of Vedic origin. Mostly the art of Dance was displayed before the gods and as the religion of the Aryans was for chosen people and above all for the Aryan's own self,—he applied his heart and soul identifying himself with nature in all her moods to please his own God. He had a firm belief that the gods themselves in an invisible form came down from heaven to see his performances and he displayed his art with inspiration and not with the mercenary propensities of modern times. Thus we find that where the hand goes, eyes also go there, where the eyes go, mind also goes there, where the mind goes there the mood (Bhava) follows and where the mood goes there flavour (Rasa) arises.

Aesthetic experience, from the Indian point of view, is not the exposition of the dancer's personality; it is the work of the spectator; all that the artiste can do is to provide the conditions. Sentiment is that emotional quality which distinguishes a work of art from a mere statement, and aesthetic emotion from the common emotions experienced in daily life. To the Indian, the dance like any other arts, has a spiritual significance independent of its theme or charm, for "by clearly expressing the flavour and enabling men to taste thereof, it gives them the wisdom of Brahma whereby they may understand how every business is unstable; from which indifference to such business, and therefrom, arise the highest virtues of peace and patience, and thence again may be won the bliss of Brahma." In this connection we may quote Prof. Levi's apt remark in translation: "Indian

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genius produced a new art which the word '*Rasa*' summarises and symbolises, and which condenses it in one brief formula: the poet does not express but he suggests."

It is evident from his stupendous work *Natya Shastra* that the sage Bharat had conceived of the imperativeness of the existence of Rasa in a work of art much before dealing with the technicalities of Rasa and Bhava. Rasa is the "niryas", the essence or the extract of any concrete or abstract object. Bharata narrates at the outset the episode of the fight between the gods and the demons over the possession of Amrita or nectar, which in other words is aqua pura or pure water, obtained after churning of the ocean. This battle obviously is over the elixir of life or *Rasamrita*.

Again Bharata creates the Apsaras or the heavenly nymphs for the womanly or Lasya movements. These Apsaras are nothing but containers or receptacles of water, as have been mentioned earlier. Here also Bharata feels the urgent necessity of Rasa and gives shape to it according to his artistic conception.

In other art forms the thinkers and writers could not eliminate the utter necessity of Rasa. Let us take only one example to elucidate our contention.

This example is from "*Vishnudharmottara*",[15] an ancient compendium on the art and science of Indian sculpture and painting, as Bharata's *Natya Shastra* enfolds Indian drama, dance and music.

At the very beginning of the book which describes the origin of Indian painting to Vajra or Indra, who approaches him with a request that the former should teach him the principles of the art of sculpture and painting, the commentator narrates a very interesting legend.

He says that once the sage Nara-Narayana was engaged in rigorous penance. Indra apprehended that the sage would obtain power after this hard and rigid penance, and his throne would be in danger. So in order to disturb the penance he sent the Apsaras, who came down to the earth and started dancing in very amorous poses. The sage was standing under a mango tree. When he saw the dancing Apsaras he tore away a mango twig and with the juice oozing out from the twig he drew out a picture of woman on his thigh. On seeing the drawing the Apsaras put their hands to cover their faces out of shame and flew away to the heavens. They reported the matter to Indra that the sage had drawn a picture of a woman, which was so attractive, that they had to retire out of shame. They were proud of their own prettiness but when they saw that picture they could realise that it was difficult for them to enamour a man with their physical beauty who had a much better idea of the beautiful features of a woman. Then all the gods and the goddesses peeped at the picture. They came down and slashed away the portion of the picture out of the thigh of Nara-Narayana. They took away that drawing to the heavens, injected life into it, and named it as "Urvashi," as it took its birth on the thigh or Uru.

Then there was a conference among the gods and goddesses and it was decided in that conference that they could not keep the created thing with them in the heavens leaving out her creator on the earth below; a creator

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who had such a conception of beauty in his mind. They then brought a chariot and got the sage seated on it and then in a procession took him as well away to the heavens.

The idea behind the narration of the above story is that a great work on sculpture and painting could not do without Rasa and had to start with it. It began with *Amra Rasam* or the juice of a mango, and informed that the first painting in this universe was drawn with the aid of mango *juice.*

To evoke Rasa in the spectator is the aim and object of the Hindu playwright. The term *rasa* had been translated as 'flavour' (by Coomaraswamy), sentiment, poetic sentiment, aesthetic experience (by Apte and others) and so on, but none of these synonyms brings out the correct idea and meaning of the term. The synonyms, however, are not of much help to anyone unless an explanation is offered, and the nature and characteristic of Rasa will be clear when the relative positions of the spectators and actors are considered. Aesthetic experience (*rasaswadana*) is the tasting of Rasa, and depends mainly on the innate and acquired sensibility of the spectator (*rasika*). To appreciate the art of India from the standpoint of life it must be studied not only from this point of view as form, but also as meaning and with reference to use. "We see on the stage, for instance, Rama and Sita, where Rama displays his affection, aided by suitable circumstances of time and place; this affection is intimated by speech and gesture alike, which indicates both dominant emotion of love and its transient shapes in the various stages of love required. The spectacle evokes in the mind of the spectator the impressions of the emotions of love which experience has planted there, and this ideal and generic excitation of the emotion produces in him that sense of joy which is known as Rasa." The fullness of the enjoyment depends essentially on the nature and experience of the spectator to whom it falls to identify himself with the hero of the other character, and thus to experience in ideal form his emotions and feelings. He may even succeed in his effort to the extent that he weeps real tears, but the sentiment is still one of exquisite joy. We may compare the thrill of pleasure which the most terrifying narration excites in us and we are all conscious of the sweetness of sad tales.

Sourindra Mohan Tagore defines a Rasa as follows: "When Rati or any other Sthayi-Bhava, being expressed through Bibhava, Anubhava and Sanchari Bhavas, delightfully vibrates over the heartstring of the audience, it is called a Rasa."

In order to understand the above definition we should know the meaning of the technical words used in it.

Sthayi-Bhava: When a Bhava (mood) is predominant in a man's mind and occupies the mind fully, it is a *sthayi-bhava.* It is neither influenced nor replaced by any other Bhava but the other Bhava is also merged into a Sthayi-Bhava.[16]

As for example, an actor in the role of Rama has to imitate and act as a lover in connection with his wife Sita and has to show anger and zeal on seeing his enemy Ravana. In order to do it he has to identify his own

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self with Rama by means of words and bodily expressions. Rama's role as a lover remains paramount in the mind of the spectator and all the intermediate Bhavas are judged from that standpoint. Now, let us take the *rati bhava* as one particular Bhava which he wants to demonstrate. If the other Bhava e.g., *utsaha* (zeal) and *hasya* (laughter) which are in harmony to *rati bhava* and *krodh* (anger) and *ghrina* (hatred) which are conflicting to *rati bhava*, come in touch with this *rati bhava*, they increase the volume of *rati bhava*. G.F. Stout in his *Manual of Psychology* says, "A man who gets up in the morning in a bad temper, due to want of sleep or similar causes, is apt to be irritated by almost everything that occurs; though in another mood the same incidents would be received with complacency."

Sthayi Bhavas are nine as there are nine Rasas, each *Sthayi-Bhava* having a respective *Rasa*. They are *rati* (*prem* or *anurag*), *has*, *shoka*, *krodha*, *utsaha*, *bhaya*, *ghrina*, *ashcharya*[17] and *Shama*.

Sanchari Bhava: Sthayi Bhavas have a few Sanchari Bhavas which have a close relation with Sthayi Bhavas and these Sanchari Bhavas increase and bring up the Sthayi-Bhavas; only at times they are at the forefront and show their importance or else they are helping factors. They are always changing and moving about, that is why, they are called Sanchari. If Sthayi Bhava is an ocean, Sanchari Bhavas are its waves or bubbles which take their birth from it and are destroyed in it.[18]

There are thirty-three such Bhavas as enumerated in the Shastras: Nirveda, (hatred from one's own self), Glani (from tiresomeness), Shanka, Shrama, Dhrity (Santosh), Jarata (which arises on hearing any bad message of a beloved), Harsha, Dainya, Ougrya, Chinta, Trasa, Asuya or Irsha (arising from somebody's riches or wealth), Amarsha, Garva, Smriti, Marana, Mada, Supta, (a particular situation at the time of lying down), Nidra, Vivodha, (to awake or to be awakened), Vrira, (Lajja, bashfulness), Apasmar (lunaticism), Moha, Mati (the knowledge of things at their proper places), Alasya, Avega, Tarka, Avahitta, Vyadhi, Unmada, Vishada, Autsukya and Chapalya. Barring these there are other Bhavas in the human mind, but the above-mentioned are the main ones.[19]

Bibhava: The cause of any Sthayi Bhava which enter into the composition of any poem or drama, are called Bibhava (determinants). Bibhava is of two kinds, viz., Alamvana and Uddipana.

Alamvana Bibhava: That which is essential to the awakening of Sthayi Bhava is called Alamvana Bibhava, such as the hero and the heroine, who are the mutual stay of each other.

Uddipana Bibhava: That which excites a Rasa is called the Uddipana Bibhava. Uddipana Bibhava constitutes the endeavours of the character concerned, and his experience of a feeling of similarity as to time and place.

Anubhava: Anubhavas are consequents or deliberate actions. Anubhava is the expression by means of limbs of any Sthayi or Sanchari Bhava.

Anubhavas and Mudras (to be discussed later) are the signs of Bhavas in a dance. They are the languages by means of which the idea of a dance is narrated. Every Bhava can be expressed by its particular Anubhava.

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The language of a few Bhavas is given below as examples:

Nirveda: Nirveda is insulting one's own self and also thinking to be lowered down in prestige and status by means of Tattwa Gyan, Vipatti, Irsha etc. Nirveda can be expressed by the following signs—The Mudra of Chinta, wiping away tears, deep breathing, pale-facedness and the Mudras of Uchchas, Dainya and Asahayata.[20]

Shanka: This is a mood of unforeseen frightfulness resulting from one's own ill-doings or by treachery of others. The following outward expressions on a human body detect this Bhava: The shivering of the body, dry lips, the Mudras of Chinta on the eyes, the hand gestures of Vyakulata, colourless body and the change of voice.[21]

Jarata. This Bhava arises on hearing any good or bad news affecting the hearer's beloved. The Signs are: Sitting quiet, and the Mudras of Nirnimesh Netras.[22]

Many dancers and critics think that it is impossible to depict these Bhavas, but it is not so and it can be well realised from the exact codification of the extant old works how far the dancers in olden times were efficient in this particular branch of knowledge and practice as to exhibit a perfect art. The efficiency of the Indian dancers will be discussed later from which it should also be deduced how far this art was advanced when at its highest summit.

Sattwika Bhava: The mental condition arising from the Sattwika Guna is called Sattwika Bhava. Still it sometimes assumes different shapes on account of Anubhava. Stambha, Sweda, Romancha, Swarabhanga, Bepathu, Vaibarnya, Asru and Pralaya constitute the Sattwika Bhava. Coomaraswamy speaks of one Sattwabhava as involuntary emotional conditions, but it seems to be meaningless and without any basis. A Sattwa Bhava cannot be itself an involuntary emotional condition unless it is influenced by Anubhava.

The above mentioned Bhavas are expressed by males and also females in both Tandava and Lasya, but there are a few Bhavas which seem to be better exhibited by females in Lasya and these Bhavas beautify the fair sex. There are twenty such Bhavas and they are divided into three classifications:—(1) Shariraj or which keeps connection with the Sharira or body. (2) Ayatnaj or which springs from itself or spontaneous and (3) Swabhavaj or which arises from one's nature.

Shariraj: There are three; Hava, Bhava and Hela.

(1) Hava: When the eyes and eye-brows are changed as a result of Bhava (mentioned below) in a man's mind, it is called Hava.

(2) Bhava: It is the first passionate yearning in a human mind by Raja and Tama Gunas. There is no outward expression of this Bhava but it does its work inwardly.

(3) Hela: It exists when there is a linking of Shringara with Hava. These three seem to be of vulgar type.[23]

Ayatnaj: There are seven such Bhavas.

Shobha: When the limbs are influenced softly by the desire of

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Saundarya, Vasua, Tarunya and Priya-Milan, it is Shobha.[24]

Kanti: When the Shobha Bhava is exclusively covered by passion, it is called Kanti.[25]

Madhurya: Not to be greatly influenced by Bhava is *Madhurya*.[26]

Dwipti: The spreading or Vistara of Kanti Bhava is *Dwipti*.[27]

Pragalvya: When perplexity is not seen.[28]

Audarya: To keep Prashraya always intact in every condition Audarya.[29]

Dhairya: The Bhava of patience is Dhairya.[30]

Swabhavika: There are ten Swabhavika Bhavas.

Leela: To imitate the lover by voice and physical care.[31]

The best and famous example of Leela can be had from Ras Leela which is prevalent even now. In it, Radha imitates Lord Krishna and taking his flute dances the dance of Krishna.

Vilasa: The sudden and beautiful change in the expressions of the body and voice as a result of meeting with the loved ones is called Vilasa.[32]

Vichchitti: When there is a great change by dress and Kanti is influenced thereby, it is called Vichchitti.[33]

Vibhrama: To put on a garment of a particular portion of the body on a different limb in haste.[34]

Kilinkichita: To depict Krodha, Asru and Harsha together is Kilinkichita.[35]

Mottayita. To be merged in the Bhava of the beloved when the name of him or the name of anything pertaining to him is mentioned.[36]

Kuttamita: To show false anger when the lover has advanced nearer.[37]

Bibboka: To ill behave with the lover even when Abhimana does not exist.[38]

Lalita: To arrange the limbs gracefully and their movements.[39]

Vihrita: The Bhava of silence due to bashfulness even after meeting with the lover.[40]

It is impossible to give a full account and description of the entire list of Bhava in this book, but the above mentioned are the main ones, which lead us to a better position to understand the Rasas.

Broadly speaking there are eight Rasas, e.g., Shringara (erotic), Vira (heroic), Karuna (pathetic), Rudra (furious), Hasya (humorous), Bhayanaka (terrible), Bibhatsya (odious) and Adbhuta (wondrous). A ninth Rasa Shanta (peaceful) is also added by some.[41] A few writers have also included Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya and Madhura as Rasas. But strictly speaking they are not so, they may be called Bhavas. The introduction of the last five as Rasas is made in Vaishnavite literature.

The deities attached to different Rasas can be given as:

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Rasa	Deity
Shringara	Vishnu
Vira	Indra
Karuna	Yama
Rudra	Rudra
Hasya	Pramatha
Bhayanaka	Kala
Bibhatsa	Mahakal (a form of Shiva)
Adbhuta	Gandharva
Shanta	Narayana

Colour attributed to Rasas.

Rasa	Colour
Shringara	Dark brown
Vira	Golden
Karuna	Indian rock dove
Rudra	Red
Hasya	White
Bhayanaka	Black
Bibhatsa	Blue
Adbhuta	Yellow
Shanta	White, like *Kunda* flower.

The eight Rasas give rise to mental expansion, elation, perturbation and withdrawal of mind, i.e., Shringara and Hasya to the first, Vira and Adbhuta to the second, Bibhatsa and Bhayanaka to the third, and lastly Karuna and Raudra to the fourth.

In classic times two comely girls appeared and removed the two wings of every scene. In the Shringara or Adi Rasa, the white; in the Vira, the yellow; in the Karuna, the smoke coloured; in the Hasya, the partly-coloured; in Bhayanaka, blue; in Bibhatsa, smoke coloured; in Adbhuta, black; in Raudra, the red drop-scene would be used. According to some the red colour is of universal use.

Shringara: Adi Rasa or Shringara is divided into two parts, Vipralambha and Sambhoga.

Vipralambha: When a lover pines for the sight of his or her beloved, it is called Vipralambha. It is divided into four classes: Purba-Raga, Mana, Pravasa, and Karuna.

(*a*) *Purba-Raga:* There are three kinds of Purba-Raga—(*i*) Nili-Raga, (*ii*) Kusumbha-Raga and (*iii*) Manjishtha Raga.

(*b*) *Mana:* There are two kinds of Mana, (*i*) Puranaya Mana and (*ii*) Irsha Mana. There are six kinds of Irsha Mana; Sham, Bho, Dana, Nati, Upeksha and Rasatmaka.

Vir: There are four classes of Vir Rasa, viz., (1) Dana, (2) Dharma,

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(3) Daya and (4) Yudhdha. The hero of Dana is Karna; of Dharma, Judhishthira: of Daya, Jimutbahana and of Judhdha, Ramchandra.

Hasya: Hasya Rasa is of 6 kinds, viz., (1) Smita, (2) Hasita, (3) Bihasita, (4) Avahasita, (5) Apahasita and (6) Atihasita.

The good only resort to Smita and Hasita; the indifferent to Bihasita and Avahasita and the vulgar to Apahasita and Atihasita.

Karuna, Bibhatsa, Raudra, Vira and Bhayanaka are hostile to 'Shringara'; Bhayanaka and Shanta to 'Vira'; Hasya and Shringara to 'Karuna'; Bhayanaka and Karuna to 'Hasya'; Shringara, Vira, Raudra Hasya and Shanta to 'Bhayanaka'; Shringara to 'Bibhatsa'; Hasya, Shringara and Bhayanaka to 'Raudra'; and lastly Vira, Shringara, Raudra, Hasya and Bhayanaka to Shanta.

Vrittis: In Shringara, Hasya and Karuna, the Kaishiki Vritti; in Vira, Raudra, and Adbhuta, the 'Sattati' and 'Bharati Vritti'; and in Bhayanaka, Bibhatsa and Raudra the 'Arabhati Vritti' respectively are employed.

(i) *Kaiṣhiki Vrittis:* When the actors and actresses discourse excellent music and perform dancing with amorous accompaniments, it is called Kaishiki Vritti.

(ii) *Sattati Vritti:* The Vritti which is replete with Sattwa Guna, heroism, bounty, kindness and simplicity, which has just a sprinkling of Adi Rasa, which is devoid of grief and which excites joy is named Sattati Vritti.

(iii) *Bharati Vritti*. That which is full of grave speeches, conducted by great men only and which is mostly carried on in Sanskrit, is called Bharati Vritti.

(iv) *Arabhati Vritti*: Which contains Maya, jugglery, war, anger imprisonment, killing etc., goes by the name of Arabhati Vritti.

The look in Shringara Rasa should be cheerful, chaste, graceful and languishing and it should be ardently directed to the beloved object.

In the Vira Rasa the look should be open grave, fixed dazzling and contracted.

In the Karuna Rasa the eyes should be half shut, the pupils should show grief and the looks should be directed at the tip of the nose.

The Raudra Rasa requires restless lids and the fixed, red hard, frowning look.

In the Hasya Rasa the pupils should be partly hid and be rolling; at times the lids should be partially closed. The pupils should sometimes be fixed and others active.

The eye lids in the Bhayanaka Rasa should sometimes be stretched fully and at others closed. The looks should at times be restless and be cast around fearfully, as if searching for the path to fly.

In the Bibhatsa Rasa the eyes should be partially shut and the lids and pupils restless. The side-glance and very contracted look go in as adjuncts.

In the Adbhuta Rasa the look should be cheerful and eyes contracted with staring orbs and full pupils, and also at times the eyes should be half-shut.

A few of the following Ragas have become obsolete. Even if some Indian musicians boast of knowing a few of them, they are incorrect and

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can in no way keep pace with the Rasa. But the list of Ragas as given in Sanskrit texts is given and the present musicians should find out their own tunes to suit each Rasa.

In Shringara: Malabasri, Madhyamadi, Panchama, Desapali, Megha, Kukumbha, Malaba, Shri, Hindola, Saindhabhi, Gurajari, Gaundaki, Tori, Jayatsri, Prahamanjari, Natta, Mallara, Chhaya, Lalita, Dravira, Gaura, Sindhura, Belabali, Gauri, Karnata Gaura, Dhanasika, Ballari, Susthavi and Hunjika.

In Vira: Natta, Saindhabika, Belabali, Dhanasri, Sri Gauri Gaura, Megha, Soma, Dhanwasika, Megharangi, Tori, Devakriti, Shankarabharana, Hindola, Deshakha, Chhaya, Lalita, Bedhagupta, Draviragaura, Srikanthika, Tara, Malavagaura, Despali, Malaba, Nagadhdhwani, Turushkagaur and Gaura Saranga.

In Karuna: Saveri, Kamodi, Ramkeli, Asavari, Belavali, Saindhavi, Bangala, Desi, Kausiki, Bhupali, Gandhara and Jayatsri.

In Hasya: Kausiki, Kamodi, Sankara, Bangala and Natta.

In Rudra: Turushka Gaura.

In Bhayanaka: Mallara.

In Bibhatsa: Pulindika.

In Adbhuta: Natta.

In the Shringara Rasa, the Chhurita; in the Vira, the Laghu dance; in the Karuna, the Pebali; in the Raudra, the Laghu dance; in the Adbhuta, the Bahurupa; in the Hasya, the Vikata; in the Bhayanaka, the Mattavali and in the Bibhatsa, the Jakkari dance should be employed.

The above dances are not practiced in modern times; moreover many of these dances are not known at present. But it is the hands and power of the modern dancers to suit their pantomimes and dancing items for the actual ideas of the sentiments or Rasas. It is very easy for an Indian dancer to fit in a particular dance according to a suitable Rasa which can be easily understood by an Indian only.

The following songs like a few above-mentioned Ragas and dancing have also become obsolete. But the sentiments of the modern song should be classified according to Rasas. The songs are noted below as they have been found in Sanskrit texts. In the Shringara Rasa, Amritabandhaka; in Vira, Lahari; in Karuna, Kambuka; in Raudra, Vinodaka; in Hasya, Chhutila; in Bhayanaka, Dhruvapada; in Bibhatsa, Sudhashila; and in Adbhuta, Triputa songs were employed.

GESTURES AND POSTURES

THE essential features in a dance are gestures and postures. Many writers and critics want to include all the movements of human limbs in one Sanskrit word, 'Mudra', but this word is not a correct expression and

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it means a 'sign' or Chinha. Some trace the origin of this word from the Persian word 'Muhar' meaning a sign. The correct origin of the word 'Mudra' is from Tantrik texts. The Mudras are positions of the fingers of hands only, practised in devotion or religious worship. Both Manmohan Ghosh and Woodroffe are of opinion that tantrik Mudras (ritual gestures of the hand) have some resemblance to the manual gestures used in Abhinaya. This, however, is not sufficient to allow us to suggest any clear connection of tantrik ritual with the origin of Abhinaya. In view of the above facts we should discard the word 'Mudra' for two reasons, (1) Mudra is the hand gestures practised at the time of worship only and (2) it is only a hand gesture and not gesture of any other part of the human limb. The word 'Mudra' has not been used in Abhinaya Darpana even to denote any hand or finger gesture nor by Coomaraswamy in his *Mirror of Gestures*.

Angikabhinaya or Abhinaya of the Anga is dance and this Abhinaya of the Anga or the rhythmical movement of the limbs depicts the dance by means of suitable gestures and postures. These gestures are the language of the dance codified and laid down in Abhinaya Darpana. Henceforth we will refer all the movements of the different parts of the limbs as gestures. As the mythology goes, recalling all the *Vedas*, the Blessed Brahma found the *Natya Veda* from the several parts of the four Vedas as desired. From the *Rig Veda* he drew forth the words, from the *Sama Veda* the singing, from the *Yajur Veda* gestures and from the *Atharva Veda* the flavours. Thus we can trace the origin of the Nritya gestures from *Yajur Veda*.

Before going into the details of different gestures of the different parts of the body, we should consider the difference in the enumeration of these in the old Sanskrit texts, especially *Natya Shastra* and Nandikeshwara. Besides these, a few examples of gestures taken from later works which are simply symbols to denote gods, goddesses, emperors, animals, rivers, mountains and so on, will also be mentioned.

Head-Gestures

According to *Natya Shastra*, there are thirteen gestures of the head, while Nandikeshwara has only nine. Among them 5 gestures have common names in both the works; besides these the names of 2 gestures agree partially. The names of all these gestures as they occur in both the works are given below:

Abhinaya Darpana: Sama, Udvahita, Adhomekha, Alolita, Dhuta, Kampita, Paravritta, Utkshipta, Paribahita.

Natya Shastra: Akampita, Kampita, Dhuta, Bidhuta, Paribahita, Adhuta, Abadhuta, Anchita, Nihanchita, Paravritta, Utkshipta, Adhogata, Lolita.

Kathakali also describes nine movements of the head.

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Eye-Gestures

According to the *Natya Shastra*, there are three classes of eye-gestures, such as (a) eyes for expressing Rasas, (b) eyes for expressing 'Sthayi-Bhavas' and (c) eyes for expressing 'Sanchari Bhavas. Each of the classes (a) and (b), in their turn, has eight varieties, while class (c) has twenty varieties. But *Abhinaya Darpana* is not so elaborate in its classification or division of these gestures. It enumerates only eight varieties. Kathakali follows *Abhinaya Darpana*. The classification in the two words has no common name.

Neck-Gestures

The *Natya Shastra* enumerates nine kinds of these gestures while the *Abhinaya Darpana* gives four kinds. There are also four postures of the neck in Kathakali. The two enumerations possess no common names.

Hand-Gestures

Though the *Natya Shastra* and *Abhinaya Darpana* agree in classifying the hand gestures into (a) single hand (Asamyuta Hasta), (b) combined hand (Samyuta Hasta), and (c) hand gestures for dance (Nritta Hasta) and these three classes possess many common names, yet they somewhat differ as regards the number of gestures in each class as well as in their definition and application.

(a) **Single hand gestures:** According to *Natya Shastra* there are twenty-four gestures in this class, while in the *Abhinaya Darpana* their number is twenty-eight. In both the works twenty-two gestures have common names. Their description and application too in the two works have considerable agreement. The 24 gestures are Pataka, Tripataka, Kartarimukha, Ardhachandra, Aral, Shukatunda, Mushthi, Shikhara, Kapiththa, Katakamukha, Shuchi, Padmakosha, Sarpashirsha, Mrigashirsha, Kangula, Alapadma, Chatura, Bhramara, Hamsasya, Hamsabaktra, Hamsapaksha, Sandansha, Mukula, Tamrachuda.

(1) The definition of the following thirteen gestures is similar in substance in both the works: Pataka, Tripataka, Ardhachandra, Arala, Shukatunda, Mushthi, Shikhara, Padmakosha, Sharpashirsha, Mrigashirsha, Chatura, Bhramara and Mukula.

(2) The following gestures have some points of agreement as regards their application: Pataka, Tripataka, Ardhachandra, Mushthi, Katakamukha, Padmakosha, Sarpashirsha and Mukula.

(3) The definitions of the following gestures vary in both the works: Kartarimukha, Katakamukha, Kapiththa, Shuchi, Kangula, Alapadma, (Alapallava), Hamsapaksha, Samdamsa, Tamrachuda.

(4) The following gestures of *Natya Shastra* are sub-divided according to their *Viniyogas* (usages) and special instructions have been given as to

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how a gesture is to be used in different groups of things. Pataka, Tripataka, Arala, Shuchimukha, Chatura, Samdamsa.

(5) Combined hand gestures: *Natya Shastra* names thirteen gestures of this class, while *Abhinaya Darpana* gives twenty-three. The two classifications have eight common names. Anjali, Kapota, Karkata, Swastika, Dola, (*Abhinaya Darpana*) (*Dol—Natyas Shastra*), Pushpaputa, Utsanga, Katakabardhana (*Abhinaya Darpana*), (*Katakabardhamanaka—Natya Shastra*).

As a result of the comparison of the combined hand gestures named similarly in the two works we have the following facts:

(1) The following gestures in both the works have substantially the same definitions, and their applications also agree mutually to a great extent. Anjali, Kapota, Karkata and Pushpaputa.

(2) The gesture named Pushpaputa is almost similarly defined in both the works.

(3) The remaining 3 gestures are differently defined and applied in the two works.

In Kathakali, hand gestures seem to have been borrowed from the *Agamas* and *Natya Shastra*. It is heard that there are 64 hand gestures in Kathakali. But a dancer ordinarily uses only four, viz, Pataka, Kataka, Mudra and Mushthi.

The following 24 hand gestures are the most important ones in Kathakali—Pataka, Tripataka, Kartarimukha, Ardhachandra, Arala, Shukatunda, Mushthi, Sikhara, Kapiththa, Katakamukha, Suchimukha, Mudra, Sarpasirsa, Anjali, Pallava, Mukura, Bhramara, Hamsasya, Hamsapaksa, Vardhamana, Mukula, Urnanabha, Kataka.

The following are the 39 combined hand gestures in Kathakali—Kataka-Mushthi, Shikhara-Mushthi, Hamsasya-Mushthi, Kataka-Hamsapaksha, Mrigasirsa-Hamsapaksha, Mudra-Mushthi, Mudra-Pataka, Hamsapaksha-Pataka, Mukula-Mushthi, Shikhara, Mukula, Vardhamana-Anjali, Katakanjali, Suchimukha-Anjali, Kartarimukha-Mudra, Kataka-Shuchimukha, Vardhamana-Hamsapaksha, Mudra-Pallava, Kataka, Kataka-Mukura, Mushthi Shikhara-Hamsapaksha, Pataka-Kartarimukha, Kartarimukha-Mushthi, Ardhachandra-Mushthi, Kartari-Kataka, Hamsasya-Pataka, Pataka-Kataka, Shikhara-Anjali, Vardhamana-Hamsasya, Pataka-Mushthi, Pataka-Mukulam, Hamsapaksa, Pataka-Kartarimukha, Anjali-Kataka, Pallava-Mushthi, Kataka-Mudra, Kartari-Kataka.

The following 3 hand gestures are the same with *Abhinaya Darpana* and *Natya Sastra*. Katakamukha, Sarpasirsa and Mukula.

The following 9 names are the same but the construction is different: Pataka, Tripataka, Kartarimukha, Ardhachandra, Arala, Shukatunda Suchimukha, Mrigasirsa, Hamsasya.

Kathakali Urnanabha is the same as *Natya Shastra*, whereas there is no mention of it in *Abhinaya Darpana*.

The following 5 gestures exist in Kathakali only. Mudra, Pallavam,

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Mukuram, Vardhamana and Kataka.

The construction of the following 5 gestures in Kathakali is different whereas it is the same both in *Natya Shastra* and *Abhinaya Darpana*: Mushthi, Shikhara, Kapiththa, Bhramara and Hamsapaksha.

(c) **Nritta Hastas**: According to *Natya Shastra* they are twenty-seven in number and different from the single hand and combined hand gestures. But their number in the *Abhinaya Darpana* is thirteen and they are not anything different from the single and combined hand gestures; for 6 of them, Pataka, Tripataka, Shikhara, Kopiththa, Alapadma and Hamsasya are the same as the single hand gestures of the same name and the remaining seven (Anjali, Swastika, Dola, Katakabardhana, Shakata, Pasha and Kilaka) are the same as the combined hand gestures of the same name. Thus whatever might be the number of gestures they are sixty-four according to *Natya Shastra* and fifty-one according to *Abhinaya Darpana.*

Charis

According to *Natya Shastra* Charis are thirty-two in number and are divided into two classes: (a) earthly (Bhauma) and (b) heavenly (Akashagami). But *Abhinaya Darpana* has only 8 Charis and they constitute only one class by themselves. The two works have no names in common in their Charis.

Mandalas

According to *Natya Shastra* Mandalas are twenty in number and are divided into two classes: (a) earthly (Bhauma) and (b) heavenly (Akashika), but *Abhinaya Darpana* gives only 10 of them and does not classify them at all. The two works have no common names in their Mandalas.

Bhartarnava[42] resembles *Abhinaya Darpana* to a great extent in its treatment of hand gestures of the first two kinds (*Asamyuta* and *Samyuta Hastas*). The number of Asamyuta Hastas (single hand gestures) is twenty-eight in *Abhinaya Darpana*, whereas their number is twenty-seven in *Bharatarnava*. Of these, twenty-six gestures have similar definition and description in both the works. The number of Samyukta Hastas (combined hand gestures) in *Abhinaya Darpana* is twenty-three, while in *Bharatarnava* their number is sixteen. Of these, 7 have common names in the two works, and the definition and application of six only have a substantial agreement in both.

But the treatment of Nritta Hastas in *Bharatarnava* is different from that of *Abhinaya Darpana*. Unlike *Abhinaya Darpana Bharatarnava* describes a new set of hand gestures called Nritta Hastas. In this matter the latter work bears resemblance to the extant *Natya Shastra*. The number of Nritta Hastas is sixteen in *Bharatarnava*, whereas their number is no less than twenty-seven in *Natya Sastra*. Of these twelve

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common names are found in both the works but their definitions differ.

The next important factor is how the limbs of the body are taken into action to produce harmony in dance rhythm. This can be estimated by looking at the bends (Bhangas) of the body. The ideal postures of the body in movement are based upon these Bhangas or bends which represent the deviations of the body from the central plumb line or equipose of the figure. Bhanga is the basis of Bhangi (gait). Bhangas are not mentioned in either of the two authorities and encyclopaedias of dancing viz; *Abhinaya Darpana* and *Natya Shastra* (the latter of music also). The conception of bends is of later origin and the word is first found in *Manasara*. Bhangas are of 4 kinds: (1) *Abhanga* (slight flexion), (2) *Samabhanga* (equipose), (3)*Atibhanga* (excessive flexion), and (4) *Tribhanga* (three flexions).[43]

The Abhanga pose is shown in standing gracefully with weight of the body placed on one leg. It indicates meditation, repose and serenity. 'Samabhanga' is the fourth "plastic equivalent to spiritual equilibrium." It is the gracious pose of seated or standing figures in equipose. 'Atibhanga' is concerned with the dramatic dance forms called *Tandava* i.e., the Nataraja poses of the dancing Shiva, the ecstatic dance of Krishna and others. 'Tribhanga' posture is the thrice bent figure in which the head is inclined to one side, the torso is bent in the opposite direction and part of the body below the waist takes again the reverse direction. The Tribhanga actions are dramatic dynamic flexions.

As to the favourite pose of the body, and especially of the feminine body, it was that of the three bendings (Tribhanga) that is with the head inclined towards the right (in female statues), and the bust turned towards the left, while, thanks to the Indian predilection for a sideward thrust of the hip, the legs would again turn towards the right. The pose of male statues would be the exact opposite, the head being inclined towards the left, and so forth.[44]

Now we come to the actual movements of the body. An explanation of the 'limbs' and 'bends' was given in order to be helpful for the understanding of the movements. Movements are either Charis or Sthanakas, dynamic or static. The whole of Chapter X of Bharata's *Natya Shastra* has dealt with Charis and Sthanaka movements. Sthanakas have been mentioned in *Manasara* also. The harmonised coordination of the foot, calf, thigh and waist is known as *Charis*. All actions with one leg are called Charis. There is no dance without Chari actions.

Sthanakas begin from sloka 48 but Bharata does not mention in detail the chief characteristics of Sthanakas. The body movements are elaborately and exhaustively dealt with in Bharata's *Natya Shastra*, but *Abhinaya Darpana* fails to narrate them and attaches more importance and attention to the hand gestures. According to *Natya Shastra*, body movements are divided chiefly in the following groups, Karanas, Angaharas, Rechakas and Pindibandhas. The 'Karanas' are single postures, the special features of them being that the left hand is generally put on the breast while the right hand follows the movements of the feet. Bharata defines a Karana in

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the following manner. "Let it be understood that, in what is to be said hereafter, the movements of the hand and foot should accord with those o f the waist, side, chest, back and belly. Each unit (of dance) consists of certain positions, movements and poses of the hands. A combination of these constitute a Karana." Again in verse 172: "As a general rule the left hand should be placed over the chest in producing the Karanas, the foot and right hand should accord with it". The Verse 172 is the repetition of Verse 57 and this is found in the Gwalior edition which adds 4 more slokas at the end. It is not so in the Jaipur one.

Bharata again states: "O, Dvijaṣ, I shall describe the performance of these with the Karanas and also how the actors are to combine the movements of the hands and feet in the several Angaharas and Karanas. Angaharas have their origin in Karanas. I shall describe these (Karanas). A Karana in dance is the co-ordination of the movements of the hands and feet".

"There are one hundred and eight Karanas enumerated by me".

One hundred and eight varieties of Karanas have been mentioned, but Abhinavagupta, the commentator of *Natya Shastra*, states in clear terms that the list is by no means exhaustive.

Angaharas arise out of a combination of either two, three or four of such Karanas or single unit *matrika* (to be explained later).

Bharata illustrates thirty-two varieties of such Angaharas. Abhinavagupta explained the meaning of term *angahara* in two ways: the movements of limbs in proper directions or the movements of limbs as depicted by Shiva.

The sage mentions four types of Rechakas, which imply the movements of the foot, the waist, the hand and the neck and Pindibandha is the finished figure developing from particular pieces of dance. He does not properly define and clearly explain the Angaharas, Rechakas and Pindibandhas.

Movements are divided again into Matrika, Kalapaka, Bhandaka and Sanghataka. A single unit (Matrika) of action consists of two Karnas. Three Karanas make a Kalapaka and four a Bhandaka. A cambination of five Karanas is called a Sanghataka.[45]

Bharata in another sloka (Verse No. 173, Ch. IV) gives a contrary definition of Matrika. Here he says that Matrika or prime unit is constituted by Charis and Nritta Hastas.

If an analysis or a deduction is made it becomes obvious that a Karana is the source and origin of all the movements. For want of space we will not deal with the movements of all the limbs of the body in detail nor all the separate movements of each individual limb required to produce a single Karana. In the present chapter we will confine ourselves to the treatment of one hundred and eight Karanas as inscribed in the Chidambaram temple, especially those which bear virile elements. In the compartments of the East and West Gopuras in the Nataraja temple at Chidambaram in South India these Karanas were cut on rocks with appropriate verses

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from the *Natya Shastra* underneath each of the postures. The most remarkable element to be pointed out is that all postures are exhibited by female figures.

Karanas are obviously mixture of dance movements. But the sculptures depict a particular striking pose of the movements employed in a particular Karana. In other words a striking and artistic dynamic movement in a Karana has been made static and thereafter has been inscribed in frame carved out on the stone wall of the pillar on Gopuram on the courtyard of the Chidambaram temple.

It should be remembered in this context that the familiar statue of Nataraja is also not a static posture. It is also a striking movement which attracted the attention of the sculptor out of a series of dynamic movements.

Another peculiar feature is that all such sculptures of Karanas have no resemblance, as there might have been many similar movements while performing the various Karanas.

There is no doubt that Bharata does not draw any line of demarcation or any distinction between male and female dance. Dance according to him is 'Tandava' and he attributes the whole Chapter IV of his book as *Tandava Laksanam*. But it does not necessarily mean that all the postures and Karanas should be performed by females. Bharata has always in his mind this distinction, though he does not clearly lay down any rules and regulations. Then he trained his sons and disciples each in the part for which he is best fitted; he discovers that certain aspects of the dance could be expounded only by women. Faced with this difficulty, he perforce approaches Bramha who immediately creates the Apsaras (celestial nymphs). Unto the Apsaras the 'Kaisiki Vritti' (graceful style, suited especially to the passion of love), which is one of the four modes of dramatic style, is introduced and attached. The dancer of Kaisiki should be women alone who are fit to expound this type of dance. (Ch. I. *Natya Shashtra*).

It is not necessary to deal with all the 108 Karanas. Three selected poses possible for women may be referred to, to show the coordination of the movements in each instance and figure of those sculptures.

In this Karana[46] the hand is in 'Apavidha' in the Suchi pose, the leg in 'Nikutta' and the side in 'Sannata', 'Apavidha Suchi hand' is joining the tips of the middle finger and the thumb and the remaining fingers curved. 'Nikutta' legs are bending the legs from knees as is shown in Fig. 1, K. 12. Sannata is well bent of the head on one side. The Karana is termed 'Arddha Rechita' or "half-whirl".

It is obvious that in some cases the figures are not the actual representations of the slokas inscribed underneath each of them. In Karana 12, according to verse 73, the right hand is in Apaviddha in the Suchi pose and the left hand, as a general rule of Karanas, should be on the breast, instead of raising upwards, as is depicted in the statue. The right hand should move in accordance with the movement of the feet. So the position of the right hand is immaterial here and can be put at any place. Such misrepresentations can be detected in many instances. It seems that the

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workmen and masons did not go strictly with the meaning of the verses, but were too much engaged and concerned with the artistry and aesthetic beauty of the dancing poses adhering to the general movements of the dancing body as described in *Natya Shastra.*

In Unmatta the legs are bent and the hands are in 'Rechita'. 'Rechita' of the hands are lifting them up and throwing about, moving round and round and drawing them back. The underlying sentiment is that of frenzy (Fig. 2). In the figure the movements of the hands are shown by dotted lines (K. 14).

The left hand is placed on the chest. The right hand is in 'Proddhestita Tala'. The legs are in 'Anchita'. 'Proddhestita Tala' occurs when the hand in Tripataka (the third finger is bent and all the other fingers are pointed upwards close to each other) is raised to the ears and put in 'Uddhvestita' (pointing downward). 'Anchita' of the legs occurs when all the toes are stretched out. This Karana is termed 'Karihasta' (elephant's trunk) and seems to be the best in the postures meant for females. (Fig. 19). The raising of the right hand to the ears is shown by dotted lines (K. 87.)

The following Karanas bear manly qualities and some of them possess virile sentiments. The Karana numbers are the following:—26, 42, 44 46, 47, 50, 52, 53, 64, 66, 70, 75, 76, 80, 83, 84, 99, 100, 106, 107 and 108. The respective numbers of the verses are 87, 103, 105, 107, 108, 111, 113, 114, 125, 127, 131, 136, 137, 141, 144, 145, 160, 167, 168 and 169. These Karanas are twenty-one in number and the remaining eighty seven Karanas can be prescribed for both the sexes, but some of them seem to be for females only.

Keep one leg in the 'Vrischika' pose, the left hand on one side in a bending manner and the right one at the tip of the nose. It is called Nikunchita or bent (Fig. 3). 'Vrischika' occurs when the right leg is bent backwards (so as to look like the uplifted sting of the scorpion). This pose is used in virile dance (K. 26).

Put the leg in Vrischika (explained above) and the two hands in Nikutta. Nikutta hands are placing the tips of the fingers on the respective shoulders. The posture is termed 'Vrischika Kuttita' (Scorpion in Nikutta) (Fig. 4; K. 42).

The leg is arched backwards in 'Kunchita Urddhva Lata'. The left hand is in Lata. Kunchita Urddhva Lata means bending the leg so as to expose the nether surface of the toes. 'Lata' means putting the hands in 'Pataka' (all the fingers stretched upwards) and in that pose stretching them obliquely at the sides, and then backwards. The pose is termed 'Lata Vrischika (Scorpion creeping down) and its usage is to indicate dropping to the earth from the skies (Fig. 5). The moving of the hand backwards is shown by the dotted line (K. 44).

Make Vrischika of the leg; place the two hands in 'Swastika'; then make Rechita of the hands separated from each other. *Swastika* is crossing the wrists in the form of *Swastika.* Then separate the hands and throw them about. We should not go into the details of hand gestures for this

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purpose. Rechita has already been explained above. This pose is called 'Vrischika Rechita' (whirling scorpion) and its usage is to indicate flight in the air (Fig. 6). The Swastika poses of the hands and then throwing them about are shown by the dotted lines (K. 46).

The hands are bent towards the elevations of the shoulders; the right leg is bent towards the back and kept at some distance from it. This is termed as *Vrischika* (Scorpion) and it is used to indicate aerial flight, Indra's elephant (Eravat) etc. The leg in this Karana is in the form of the tail of a scorpion. (Fig. 7; K. 47).

Make Vrischika of the right leg, and form *tilaka* on the forehead with the thumb of the right foot. The dancer carries on the left hand also to the forehead and places it with the thumb downwards so as to touch the forehead in the manner in which the Hindus make the *tilaka* (beauty-mark). The Karana is named 'Lalata Tilak' (forehead mark) (Fig. 8; K. 50).

The right leg is bent backward (*nata*), the right hand is also bent (*kunchita*), and the left hand is in *uttana*. *Uttana* is the act of placing the hands with the palm upwards. The pose is termed 'Kunchita' (angular bend) and is used to indicate mental state of a person overflowing with joy during the worship of his favourite deity. The pose indicated is that of moving forward on the right knee, the left foot being flat on the ground (Fig. 9, K. 52).

'Chakramandala' (wheeled body) occurs when the hands are led down fully and the body is curved in 'Abhyantara Apaviddha'. Abhyantara Apavidha action means making the Apaviddha action with some space between the legs. Apaviddha action is the same as, Baddha Chari' which is rubbing the two calves against each other crosswise. This is followed by 'Valana' of the thighs. *Valana* is moving the knees into the space between the thighs. This posture is used to indicate haughty gait, ornament, decoration etc. (Fig. 10; K. 53).

'Nisumbhita' or stamping occurs when the leg is bent from behind, the chest is elevated and the palm is placed in the Tilaka pose. The Tilaka pose of the palm is the same as in Lalata Tilaka. This is one of the fovourite dances of Shiva (Fig. 11; K. 64).

Make 'Atikranta Karana' of the leg and stretch it towards the front. The hands should accord with the pose of the leg. *Atikranta* means bending the leg, lifting it up and stretching it out in front and dropping it down gently. The pose is called *atikranta* (step beyond). This is more of a gymnastic pose than of a dance (Fig. 12; K. 66).

The legs are stretched backwards, the hands are in Rechita and the chest is well elevated. In Lata the two hands are stretched obliquely on either side of the dancer (as though the hands are creepers hanging down loose). In 'Lata Rechita' the left hand is in Lata and the right is whirled round and round. The posture is termed 'Garudapluta' (Kite's flight) and is used to indicate flying like a kite (Fig. 13). The movement of the left leg and the right hand is indicated by the dotted lines (K. 70).

Jump up and place the legs crosswise in front. At the same time keep

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the hands in 'Dola'. Jumping up should be in 'Harinapluta' which is making Atikranta (explained in K. 66) with the right leg. Jump up and throw down the leg. Then bend the left calf and throw it backwards. The hands should be in Sannata (well bent) and Dola. *Dola* occurs when the arms and shoulders are let down free and loose. The Pataka (see K. 44) of the hands is released (Fig. 14). The Karana is named 'Sannata' (hands well bent) (K. 75.)

'Suchi' (needle) posture is practised by lifting up the bent leg and placing it so as to touch the ground in front. The hands should accord with the dance, (action of the leg) (Fig. 15). Placing again the leg in front is shown by the dotted line (K. 76).

'Mayuralalita' (peacock's grace) is made by making Vrischika of the leg, keeping the hands in Rechita and turning Trika round and round. Vrischika and Rechita have been explained in Karanas 26 and 14 respectively (Fig. 16). Trika and Rechita have been shown by the dotted lines (K. 80).

'Harinapluta' (deer flight) occurs at the time of Atikranta Krama (explained in K. 66). Jump up and throw down the leg and place it on the calf of the leg in a bent position (Fig. 17; K. 83).

Make the 'Dola Pada'. Jump up and throw down the foot. The 'Trika' should be in 'Parivritta'. Dola Pada is first bending the leg and then swinging it from side to side and dropping it on the heel. *Parivritta* is spinning the Trika on its own axis. The movement is called 'Prenkholita' (cradle swing) and seems to be absolutely difficult for a woman (Fig. 18). The dotted lines are given to show the *Parivritta* movement and the movement of the right leg (K. 84).

'Madaskhalita' (tripping in intoxication) is, when the hands are hung down, the head is tossed about (from side to side) and the legs are in 'Valitaviddha'. Valitaviddha is moving and bending the legs and these actions are to be performed alternately with the right and left legs. Its usage is to indicate intoxication (Fig. 20. K. 99).

'Vishnukranta' or Vishnu's step occurs when the legs are stretched in front and bent as if in preparation for walking. The two hands are in Rechita (explained above) and its usage is to indicate the gait of Vishnu, (Fig. 21; K. 100).

'Nagapasarpita' (serpentine movement) is the movement when the legs are in 'Swastikapasarpita'. The head is moved from side to side. The hands are in Rechita. 'Swastikapasarpita' is releasing *Swastika* or crossing of the legs. The usage of this movement is to indicate passionate temper (Fig. 22). The dotted lines indicate the movement of the head and releasing of the legs from Swastika, (K. 106).

The body is curved. The leg is stretched in 'Talasanchara'. The chest is opened out. Talasanchara accurs when the heel is raised, the big toe is stretched out and the other toes are bent and moved slightly. The posture is termed 'Sakatasya' or cartwheel (Fig. 23; K. 107).

The feet with the heels turned up with the toes, the hands in Tripataka (first make Pataka and then bend the ring-finger) facing downwards, and

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the head in Sannata constitute this Karana. Sannata has been explained in K. 12. The pose is called 'Gangavatarana' or descent of the *Ganges* and the name is suggestive of the purpose (Fig. 24; K. 108).

From the above Karanas we also find that there are a few postures and movements which are very difficult to execute. The poses which seem to be for gymnastic purposes and bear the sentiments of extra chivalry and virility are the following. The Karana-numbers are 26, 42, 50, 53, 64, 76 and 107 (Figs. 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 15, and 23). It should be remembered that some of the poses were deliberately exhibited to please the demons to suit their temperament (Vide Ch. I, Slokas 106-113, Natya Shastra).

We conclude by mentioning another striking fact regarding the total number of the Karanas, Angas and Upangas. We are compelled to leave *Pratyangas* here, as those are not enumerated by Bharata. According to Bharata, Upangas and Angas are 6 in number. It has been stated previously that the commentator of *Natya Shastra* clearly states that the Karanas are by no means exhaustive. It does not mean that Bharata did not know or did not willingly make an elaborate treatment of the postures and movements. Why then did Bharata not enumerate either 107 or 109 *Karanas*, one more or less? The idea at the back of it is that of religious fervour. In Hindu conception the numbers 108 and 6 are regarded as auspicious and of good omen. That is why the Hindus follow the austere rites of repeating "Japa" and "Gayatri" Mantra for 108 times. We have the practice of lighting 108 lamps (*pradipa*) at the time of worshipping. After *Balidan* (animal sacrifice both in *Durga* and *Kali* worship, *puja*) 108 lamps are lighted and arranged in rows placing them on plantain barks before the deities. The lamps are made of small earthen plates, in which two wicks made of cotton are placed crosswise and the plates are filled with *ghrita*. At the time of Dipawali festival, there is a convention that the minimum number of lamps for illumination in a house must be 108. There again, it is believed, that *Nataraj* danced 108 types of dances at Tillai.

One hundred and eight *tulsi patras* (leaf of Tulsi tree; 'Tulsi' is a kind of plant with a pleasent fragrance, which is regarded very sacred) are offered to 108 different dieties in the ceremony of Shanti Sastayan (worship to bring peace and fortune in a family).

The number 6 also is deemed to be a necessary number and regarded as an essential one in dealing with fine arts in general. There are 6 Ragas (musical notes) viz., Bhairava, Kausika, Hindola, Dipaka, Sri and Megha (*Natya Shastra*). There are six major keys in Vina and Sitar (Indian musical instruments) The auspicious and religious functions of number six can be well examined by the following rites and rituals. The 6 offerings are seat, umbrella, a pair of shoes, bed, rice and water. The six excrescences from a cow which are required at the time of worshipping a deity and are considered as the emblem of purity have been mentioned in "Smriti" as, cow-dung, cow's urine, curd, milk, ghee and a bright yellow pigment prepared from the bile of a cow which is known as *gorochana*. According to Tantric tradition there are six limbs necessary for worshipping the deities.

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These are heart, head, pig-tail, armour or amulet, three eyes and both the palms with their backs. A worshipper has to perform *Nyasa* (a kind of rite) at the above-mentioned six places inducing purity unto them; and recite incantation.

Six parts mentioned in Yoga practice are: (renunciation, meditation, control of breath, belief, argument and self-realisation). The 6 kinds of strength have been mentioned which a king ought to possess and these are, Nobility, modesty, friendship, power to unite, the essential qualities to become an enemy and also to bear hardships.

Thus we find that Bharata by mentioning 6 Angas and Upangas and 108 Karanas attaches more importance to the artistic and auspicious elements borne by those numbers. It is also noteworthy that number 108 is divisible by six, is eighteen times six.

Movements of Head

Movement of the head is the source or level pose of inertia which precedes action, establishes the serene and gracious mood that clears the mind of distractions. It is the auspicious pose which precedes all performance.

(1) *Sama*: (Level), not moving, not bent, not raised. Uasge—At the beginning of dancing, sitting for prayers, pride, authoritative speech, satisfaction, feigned anger of love, indifference and cessation from action.

(2) *Udvahita*: (Raised) raising the head and keeping it still. Usage—flag, moon, firmament, mountain, flying things in the air, anything tall.

(3) *Adhomukha*: (Face inclined) the head is bent. Usage—modesty, sorrow, bowing, regarding anything vile, fainting, things on the ground, bathing.

(4) *Alolita*: (Rolling), the head is moved in a circle. Usage—sleepiness, obsession, intoxication, faintness, dizziness, hesitation, uncontrolled laughter.

(5) *Dhuta*: (Shaken), used by Bharata and others. The hand is turned to and from right to left and left to right. Usage—denial, looking repeatedly at things, condolence with others, astonishment, dismay, indifference, cold, fire, fear, first moment of drinking liquor, preparing for battle, rejection impatience, glancing at one's own limbs, summoning from both sides.

(6) *Kampita*. (Nodding, shaking), shaking the head up and down. Usage—indignation, saying "halt", enquiry, summoning, threatening etc.

(7) *Paravritta*: (Turned round), When the face is turned round the head is called Paravritta. Usage—in denoting the command, 'It should be done', anger, shame, turning away the face slightly, hair of the head, a quiver.

(8) *Utkshipta*: (Thrown up). When the head is turned aside and then raised up it is called Utkshipta. Usage—can denote the command or request, "take this" or "come". The supporting of (something) and acceptance.

(9) *Parivahita*: (Widely moved). When the head is moved from side ot side a *Chauri*, it is called *Parivahita*. Usage—denotes infatuation, yearn-

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ing for the separated lover, the praise of a deity, satisfaction, approval and cogitation.

(10) *Prakampita*: (Waving about), repeatedly moving the head forward and to both the sides. Usage—the marvellous (Adbhuta Rasa), song composition, bee, enemy's mode of fighting.

(11) *Saundarya*: (Elegance). Looking up and down, the trunk also bent. Expressing a cause, in dances showing the 'bee' hand, *Yoga* practice.

Movements of Neck

According to those who are well versed in Bhavas, there are 4 kinds of neck movements.

(1) *Sundari*: When the neck is moved to and fro horizontally it is called *Sundari*. Usage—denotes the beginning of affection, effort in the sense of 'completely' with and approval to pleasure. (Most common in Kathak.)

(2) *Tiraschina*: The neck moving in an upward movement on both sides like the gliding of a snake. Usage—denotes exercise with a sword and the gliding of a snake.

(3) *Parivartita*. The neck moving from right to left like a half-moon. Usage—in erotic dance (Lasya) and kissing the two cheeks of the beloved.

(4) *Prakampita*: When the neck is moved backwards and forwards like the movement of a she pigeon's neck, it is called Prakampita. Usage—denotes 'You' and 'I', folk-dancers, swinging, the inarticulate murmurings and the sound uttered by a woman at the time of conjugal embrace. (Very common in Bharata Natyam.)

Movements of Eyes

(1) *Sama*: (Level). Gazing without winking. Usage—at the beginning of a dance, thinking of some other matter, surprise, the image of gods.

(2) *Alokita*: (Inspecting). Swiftly turning with keen glances. Usage—potter's wheel showing 'all sorts of things', desires.

(3) *Shuchi*: (Sidelong). Looking out of the corners of the eyes without moving the head. Usage—secret purposes (*ingita*), twirling the moustaches (self-confidence), aiming an arrow, hinting and 'Kulata Natya'.

(4) *Pralokita*: Turning from side to side. Usage—looking at a thing on both sides, making signs, moving, disordered mind.

(5) *Nimilita*: (Closed). The eyes half-closed, half-open. Usage—appearance of a sage, subjection to another's will, prayer, meditation, greeting, madness and keen insight.

(6) *Ullokita*: (Looking up). Directing the glance keenly up and aside. Usage—the point of a flag, tower, temple, previous lives, height, moonlight etc.

(7) *Anuvritta*: (Following). Glancing quickly up and down. Usage can denote angry looks, friendly invitation.

(8) *Avalokita* : (Looking down). Looking at a shadow, reflection.

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Usage—bed, study, looking at one's own body etc.

(9) *Snigdha* : (Tender). The look that is associated with joy, pleasant anticipation, things after one's own heart having an inner radiance, expressing the surge of love, passion, affection etc.

(10) *Shringara* : (Love). Born of great joy, in the toils of love—raising the eye-brows and looking out of the corners of the eyes, mutual glances of those who are fast bound by amorous desires.

(11) *Adbhuta* : The ends of the eyelids slightly curved, the eyebrows raised in wonder, the eyes surging. Usage—expression of the marvellous.

(12) *Karuna* : A downcast glance, half-vouchsafed with tears, benevolent, the black pupil slowly moving, regarding the top of the nose. Usage—denotes pathos, the sense of tragic.

(13) *Vismaya* : Quickly raised, straight staring. Usage—astonishment.

(14) *Tripta* : (Satisfaction). Steady, wide opened, the pupil motionless keeping its place. Usage—resolution, *Utsaha*.

(15) *Visanna* : The eye-lids wide apart, eyelashes recurved, the pupil fixed. Usage—denotes dismay, anxiety.

(16) *Bhayanaka* : (Inspiring fear). The eye-lids raised and fixed, the pupil bright and fluttering. Usage—denotes great fear, terrible.

(17) *Druta* : Both pupils moving. Usage—denotes excitement, the heroic, radiant, direct, open, rather majestic, self-controlled, the pupils at rest.

(18) *Raudra* : (Cruel). The pupils fixed and the lids not moving, the brows contracted and raised. Usage—unfriendly, hostility, red.

(19) *Dura* . (Far). Slightly raised. Usage—idea of things at a distance.

(20) *Ingita* : Sidelong glances expressing joy. Usage—secret thought.

(21) *Vilokita* : Looking back. Usage—things or places behind.

(22) *Vitarkita* : (Deliberation). Direct, wide opened, the eye-lids separated, the pupils fixed as if in fear. Usage—consideration.

(23) *Shankita* : (Apprehensive). A little moved, a little at rest, slightly raised and moved to and fro, the pupils partly hidden. Usage—hesitation.

(24) *Abhitapta* : (Burnt). The eye-lids moving, the pupils gazing languidly. Usage—indifference (i.e., regarding a thing, but without interest).

(25) *Avalokita* : Looking down. Usage—study, reflection.

(26) *Shunya* . (Vacant). Eye-lids level, pupils visible, motionless, gaze vacant. Usage—misunderstanding.

(27) *Hrishta* : (Merry). Fluttering, pleasant, twinkling. Usage—laughter.

(28) *Ugra* : (Fierce). Very wide open, a little red at the corners. Usage—ferocity.

(29) *Vibhranta* : (Wandering). The pupils moving, rolling, unconstrained, between tears and laughter, the wandering glance of excitement.

(30) *Shanta* : (Peace). Gradually closing the lids, the eyes slightly moving, the pupils moving to the corners, the peaceful glance of dispassion.

(31) *Milita* : Nearly closed, conditions such as subjection to another's will.

(32) *Shuchana* : The eyes partly closed, following the movement of the

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Shuchi hand. Usage—pointing out.

(33) *Lajjita* : The upper eye-lid dropped, the pupil also lowered bashfully, the lashes meeting, a modest glance.

(34) *Malina* : The lashes partly closed, the pupils sunken. Usage—women (i.e., dissipation).

(35) *Trasta* : (Frightened). Inwardly expanded, the pupil raised. Usage—fear and intoxication.

(36) *Mlana* : (Dull). The pupil moving languidly and slowly, squinting, the lashes seeming to touch. Usage—insipid matters.

(37) *Mukula* : The lashes trembling and touching, the expression of the pupils mild, the upper lids lowered, this 'hid' eye indicates bliss.

(38) *Kunchita* : (Curved). The lashes a little recurved, the eye-balls a little sunk. Usage—denotes dislike or jealousy.

(39) *Akasha* : (Sky). Directed towards the sky, the pupil turned far back. Usage—things moving about.

(40) *Ardhamukula* : Smiling, the pupils just visible under the lids. Usage—bliss and rejoicing.

(41) *Anuvritta* : (Following). Repeated glancing. Usage—hurry.

(42) *Vipluta* : The lids trembling, expanded and then dropped, this 'disordered' eye indicates beauty in thing of all sorts.

(43) *Jimba* : (Oblique). Bent back, a slow and hidden glance, used to convey secret meaning and in envy.

(44) *Vikosa* : Without winking, the pupils moving, the lids wide apart. Usage—joy.

(45) *Madira* : Indirect ranging, centred, unsteady, crooked. Usage—the early stage of intoxication.

(46) *Hridaya* : Unsteady, flurried, the pupils moving, the lids recurved. Usage—mediocre things.

(47) *Lalita* : (Graceful). The corners of the eye are closed by the movement of the brows, smiling because of the working of love, direct. Usage—graceful posing.

Movements of Eye-brows

There are the following movements of the eye-brows: *Shahaja*, *Patita*, *Utkshipta*, *Chatura*, *Rechita*, and *Kunchita*. Kathakali also mentions 6 movements of the eye-brows.

Hand Gestures

The hands of an Indian dancer play an important part in his expositions. The dance of the hands tells a story word by word, so to speak, in the precisely significant language of gestures—called in Sanskrit, the language of the gods. Commercial and industrial countries of the West have developed gestures to be of great help for them in everyday pursuits, such as semaphore and heliography. India used them to enrich its fine arts,

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culture and aesthetics by these means.

These gestures represent objects either abstract or concrete. There are symbols to denote gods, goddesses, emperors, animals, rivers, mountains and so on. This gesture language is an almost perfect medium of emotional expression, if the hands themselves are beautiful and, what is more important, if they are entirely supple and controlled by years of practice.

The gestures as applied in Kathakali (a style of dance which is extant in South India) and also codified in *Natya Sastra* and *Abhinaya Darpana* will help the readers to make a comparative study and also for their artistic attraction enable them to use for practical dance demonstrations.

The respective methods to form hand gestures are not mentioned in this chapter, because the line drawings can easily serve that purpose. The usages are given to denote the meaning of the gestures and also to help the artistes in suggesting a particular object or expressing a sentiment.

Now let us look at the usages and meanings of different hand gestures.

(1) *Pataka.*

Usage: Beginning of *Natya*, clouds, forest, forbidding things, bosom, might, a river, region of gods, horse cutting the wind, lying down, attempt at going, prowess, favour, moon-light, strong, sunlight, forcing open doors, meaning of seven case endings, wave, entering a street, equality, anointing one's own body, taking an oath, palmyra leaf, silence, shield, touching things, benediction, the ideal king, saying 'such and such a place', the sea, the succession of good deeds, addressing a person, going forward, holding a sword, a month, a year, a rainy day, cleaning with a broom etc. Kathakali usages are: Sun, king, elephant, lion, bull, crocodile, arch, creeping plant or creeper, flag, wave, street, (*patala*) earth, hip, vessel, palace, evening, noon, cloud, ant-hill, thigh, leg, servant, moving wheel or disc, seat, thunder-bolt, town-gate, building, cart, gentle, crooked, door, pillow, iron club, surface of the foot, bolt, day, walk, tongue, forehead, body, like, messenger, sprout, sandy. (Fig. 1).

(2) *Tripataka*: (Denotes three parts of the flag)

Usage: Crown, tree, 'Vajra', weapon, bearer of Vajra (Indra), screw pine flower, light, rising flames, cheek, pattern drawn on the face and the body, arrow, turning round, union of man and woman, invocation descent, lifting or lowering of the face, touching auspicious things, book, site, disrespect, doubt, *Vasava* (Indra), stroking the hair, lamp, marking the brow spot, tying a turban, applying strong scent, closing the nose or ears, rubbing down a horse, the flight of certain birds, tongues of flames. According to Dhananjaya's *Dasharupa* the Tripataka hand is used in stage whispers (Janantika), to shut out the others when one person is addressed out of several persons present on the stage. Kathakali usages are: Sunset, commencement, gently address, drink, body, begging (Fig. 2).

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(3) *Ardhapataka* (Meaning half-flag)

Usage: Tender shoots (Pallava), bank of a river, dagger, knife, flag, tower, horn, saying 'both' etc (Fig. 31)

(4) *Kartarimukha*: (Meaning Arrow shaft face)

Usage: separation of woman and man, opposition, stealing, the corner of the eye, death, disagreement, lightning, sleeping alone, falling, a creeper, red paint for the feet, drawing patterns on the body, yearning of separated husband and wife, buffalo, deer, fly, whisk, hill-top, elephant, bull, cow, thick coil of hair, scissors, tower etc. Kathakali usage: sin, fatigue, Brahmin, fame, pitcher, house, religious vow, purity, river bank, dynasty, hunger, hearing, act of speaking, multitude, end, hunting, thou, word, time, gradation, we, man, mouth, enmity, boy and mongoose (Fig. 3).

(5) *Mayura*: (Meaning Peacock)

Usage: the peacock's beak, creeper, bird of omen, vomiting, forehead, stroking the hair, brow spot, wiping away tears, argument according to law (Fig. 32).

(6) *Ardhachandra*: (Half-Moon)

Usage: moon on the 8th day of the dark fortnight, hand seizing the throat, spear, consecrating an image, platter, origin, waist, anxiety, one's self, meditation, prayer, touching the limbs, greeting common people, bangle, wrist, mirror, astonishment, effort, intemperance, tying up the hair, supporting the evil doers, wiping sweat from the brow, adolescence, ability, moon, eye-brow, cloth, bow, pre-eminence, tightening the girdle, making a vessel, the body, movement of the feet, carrying a child, the back, white colour, etc. Kathakali usage: helplessness, sky, blessed man, God, remembrance, grass, man's hair, starting, smiling, what, self-praise etc. (Fig. 4).

(7) *Arala*:

Usage: drinking poison, nectar, sipping of water by Brahmins, benediction, the aversion of a parasite for a friend, dressing the hair, saying 'Come soon', circumambulation at morning and evening prayer, wiping sweat from the brow, putting collyrium on the eyes etc. Kathakali usage: dullness, tree, wedge, bud, sprout etc. (Fig. 5).

(8) *Shukatunda*: (Parrot's beak)

Usage: shooting an arrow, throwing a spear, mystery, ferocity, *Brahma* weapon, nose, curve, turning round, javelin, proceeding, fighting, crossing, disrespect, lover's quarrel, opinion, abandonment, disc etc. Kathakali usage. Hand, goad, bird, etc. (Fig. 6).

(9) *Mushthi*:

Usage: steadiness, grapping the hair, holding things, wrestling, waist,

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HAND GESTURES
AND
GESTURES OF THE BODY

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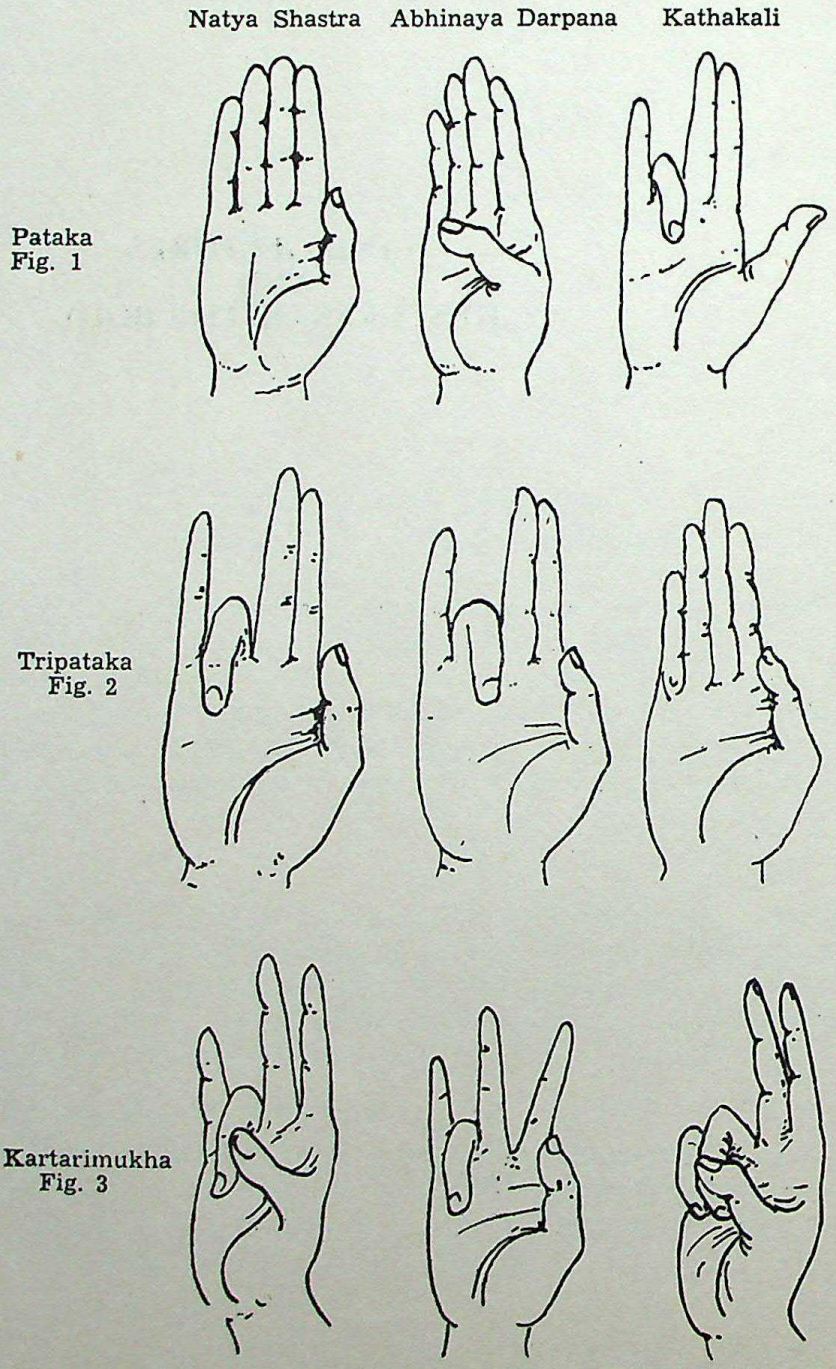
HAND GESTURES



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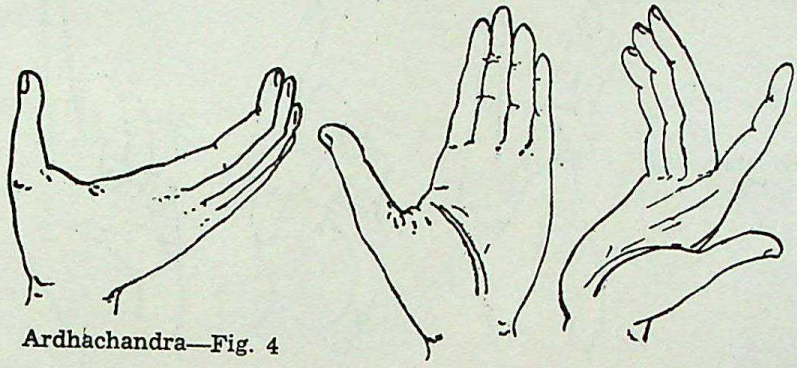
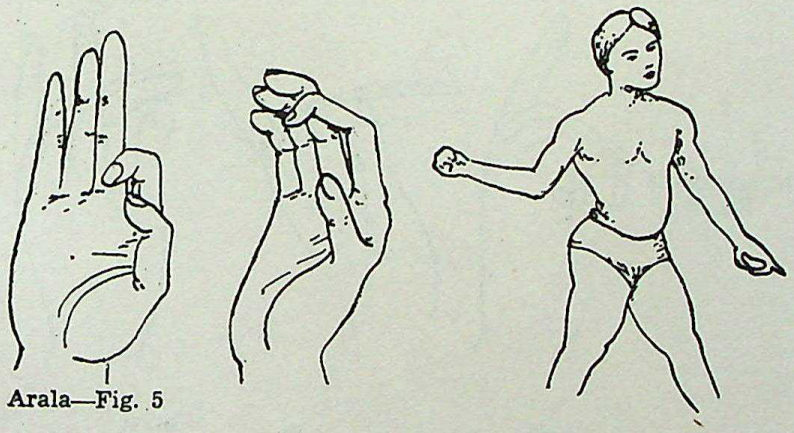
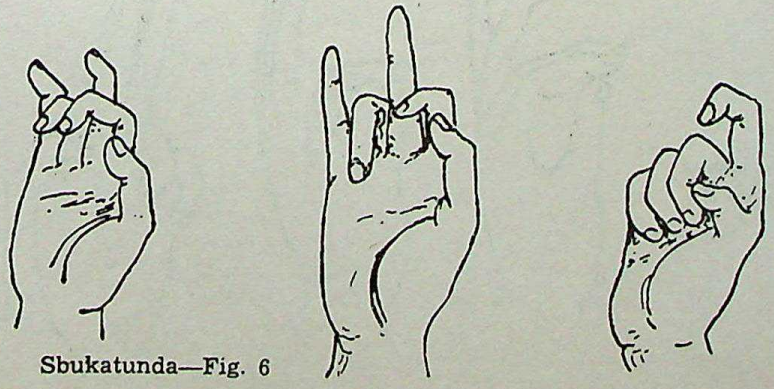
Natya Shastra | Abhinaya Darpana | Kathakali



Ardhachandra—Fig. 4



Arala—Fig. 5



Sbukatunda—Fig. 6

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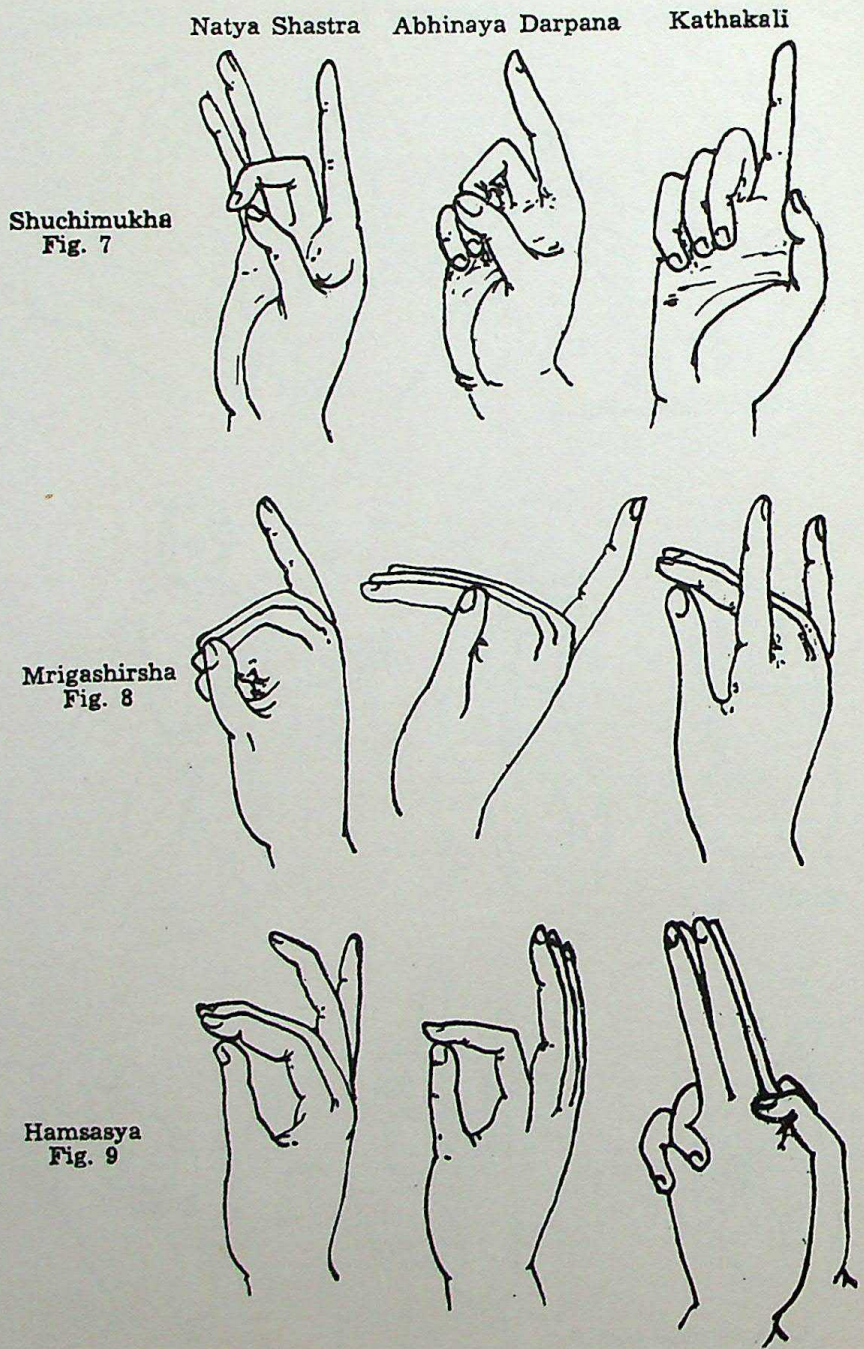

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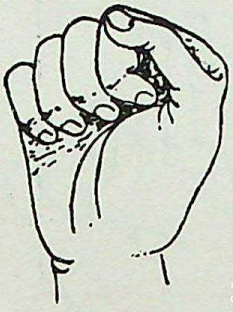
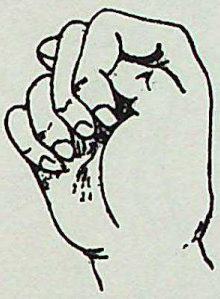
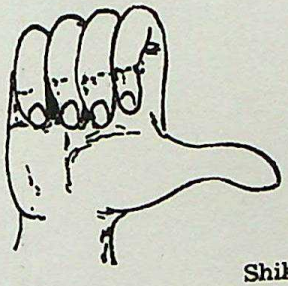
Natya Shastra
and
Abhinaya Darpana



Mushthi—Fig. 10

Kathakali





Shikhara—Fig. 11

Kapiththa—Fig. 12.

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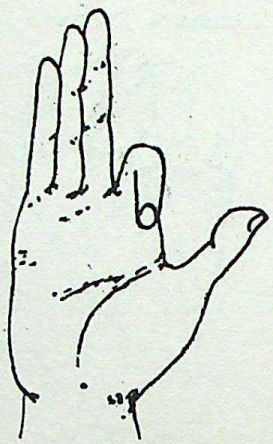
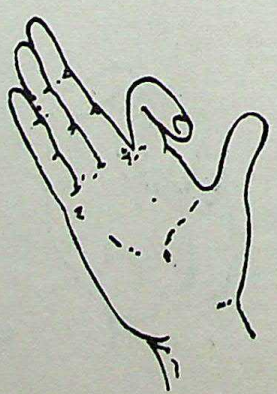
HAND GESTURES

Natya Shastra
and
Abhinaya Darpana

Kathakli



Bhramara—Fig. 13



Hamsapaksha—Fig. 14.

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Natya Shastra and Abhinaya Darpana
Not to be Found in Kathakali

Padmakosha
Fig. 15

Kangula
Fig. 16.

Sola-padma
Fig. 17

Natya Shastra

Abhinaya Darpana

Not to be Found in Kathakali

Samdamsa—Fig. 18

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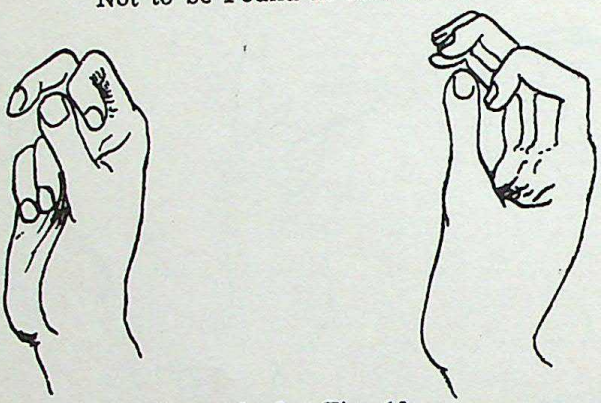
HAND GESTURES

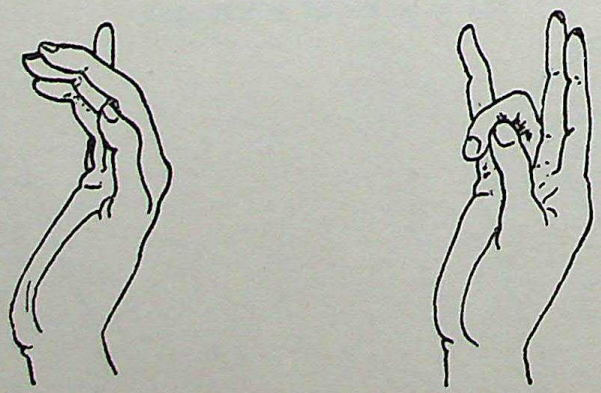
Natya Shastra

Abhinaya Darpana

Not to be Found in Kathakali



Tamrachuda—Fig. 19



Chatura—Fig. 20

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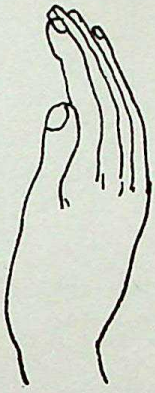
Same in the three Authorities

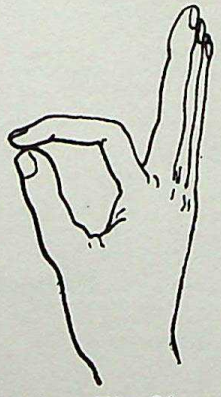
Katakamukha—Fig. 21



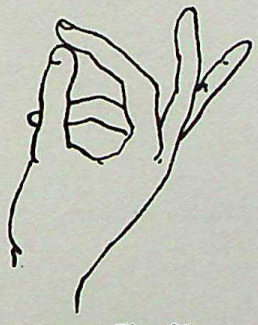
Sarpashirsha—Fig. 22

Mukula—Fig. 23

Only in Kathakali



Mudra—Fig. 24.



Mukura—Fig. 26

Pallava—Fig. 25

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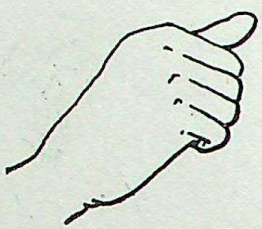
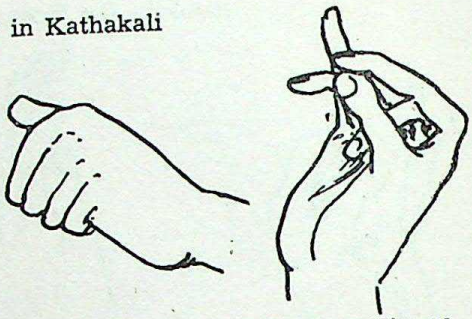
HAND GESTURES

Only in Kathakali



Vardhamana—Fig. 27



Kataka—Fig. 28

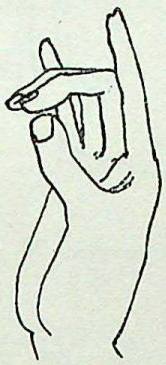
Natya Shastra

Kathakali

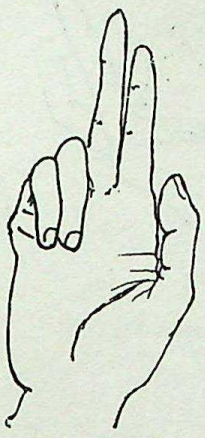
Not to be found in Abhinaya Darpana

Urnanabha—Fig. 29

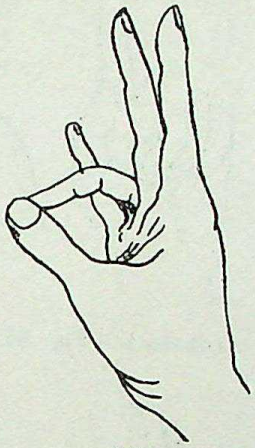
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



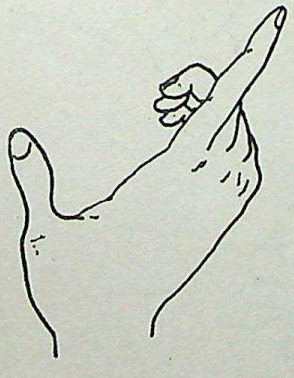
Simha-Mukha
Fig. 30



Ardhapataka
Fig. 31

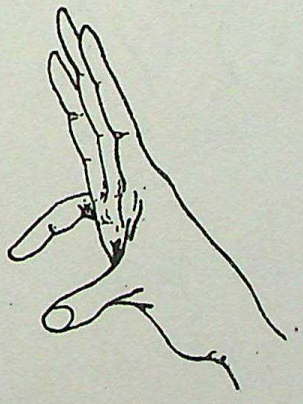


Mayura
Fig. 32



Chandrakala
Fig. 33

Trisula
Fig. 34

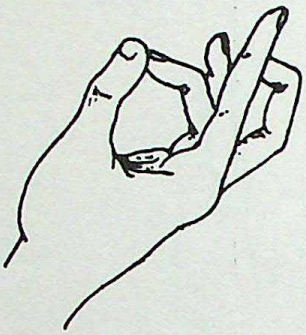


Vyaghra
Fig. 35

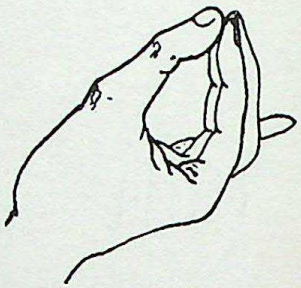
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

HAND GESTURES

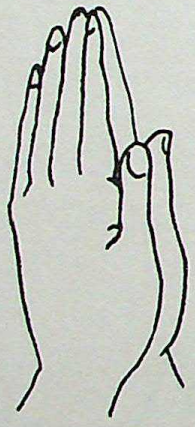
Ardhasuchi—Fig. 36



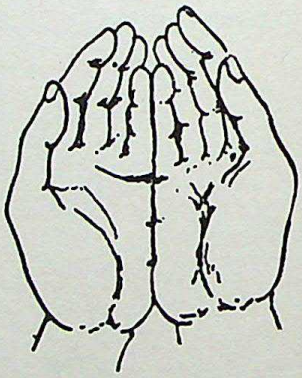
Palli—Fig. 37



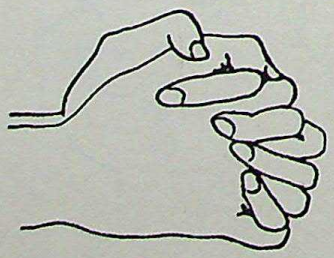
Bana—Fig. 38



Anjali—Fig. 39



Kapota—Fig. 40



Karkata—Fig. 41

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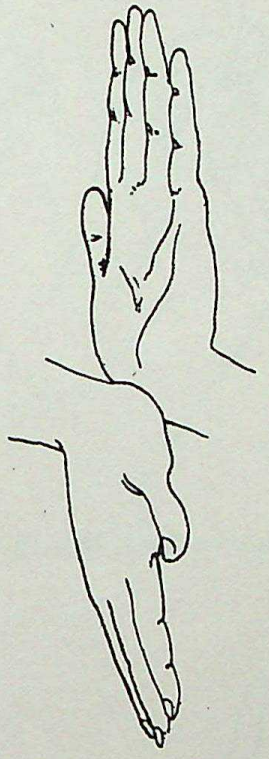
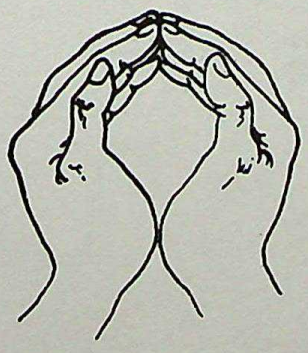
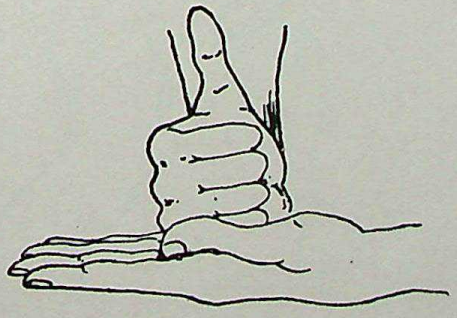


Swastika—Fig. 42



Pushpaputa—Fig. 43.



Shiva Linga—Fig. 44.

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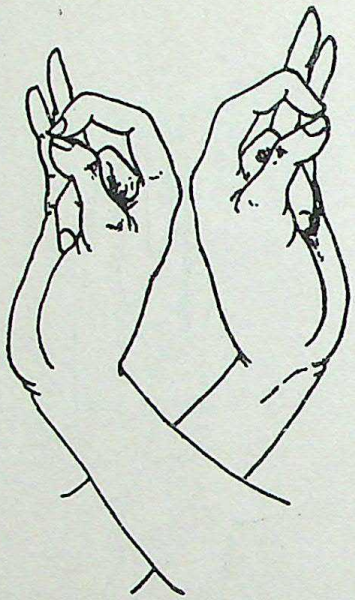
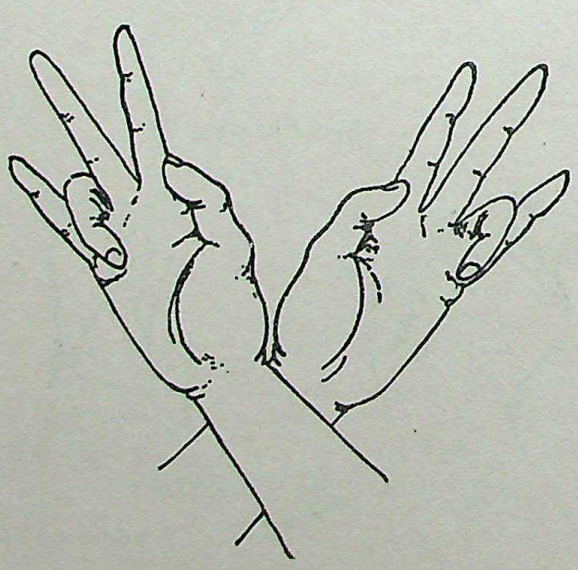
HAND GESTURES

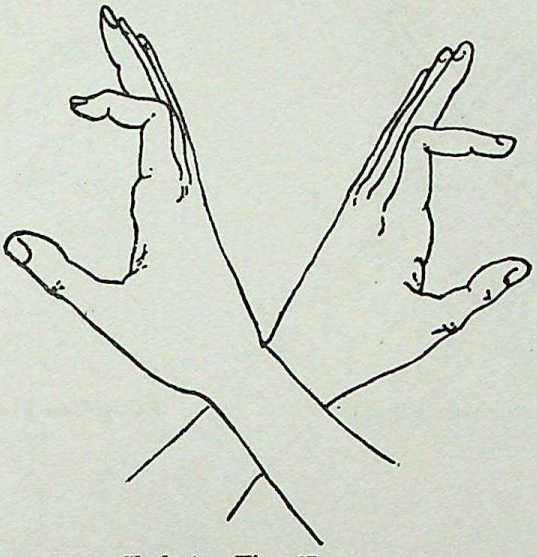


Katakavardhana—Fig. 45

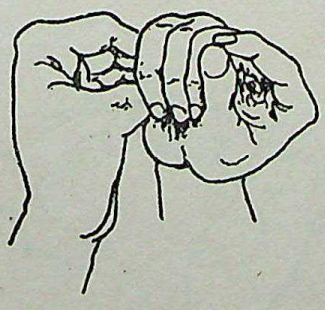


Kartari Swastika—Fig. 46

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



Shakata—Fig. 47



Nishedha—Fig. 48

Shankha—Fig. 49

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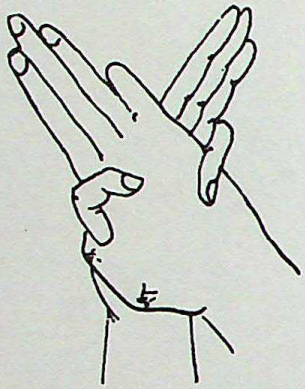
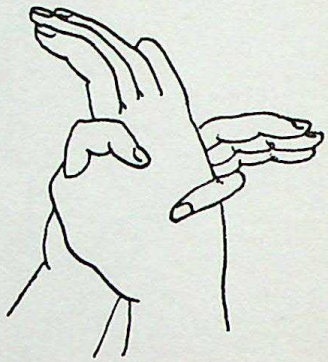
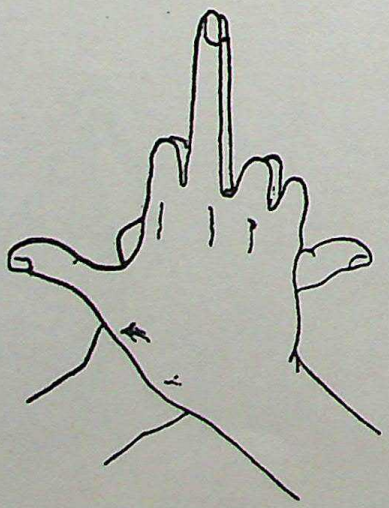
HAND GESTURES



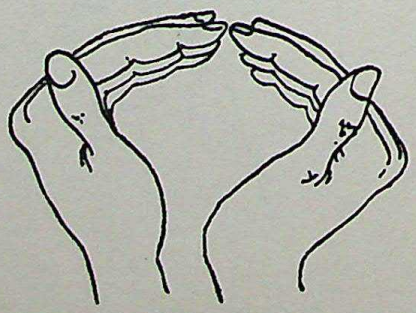
Chakra—Fig. 50



Gamputa—Fig. 51

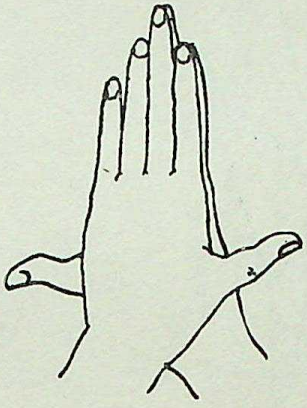


Makara—Fig. 52

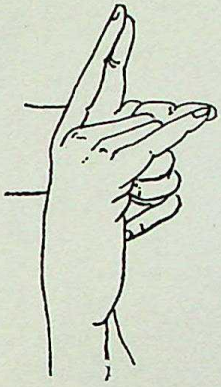


Kilaka—Fig. 53

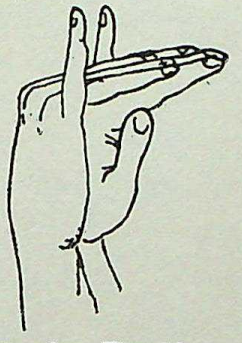
CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



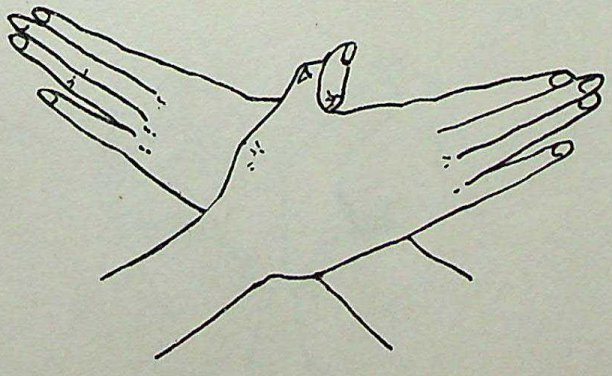
Matsa—Fig. 54



Kurma—Fig. 55



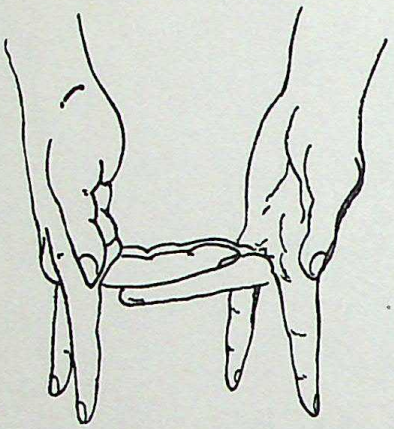
Varaha—Fig. 56



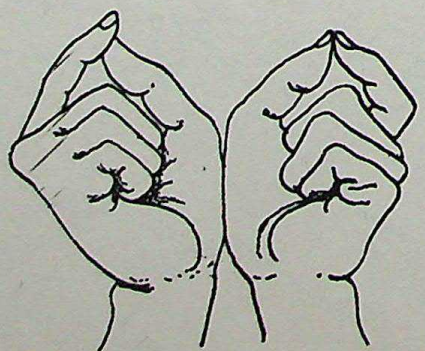
Garuda—Fig. 57

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

HAND GESTURES

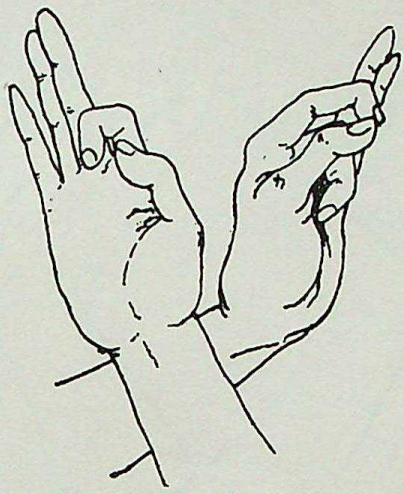


Khatwa—Fig. 58

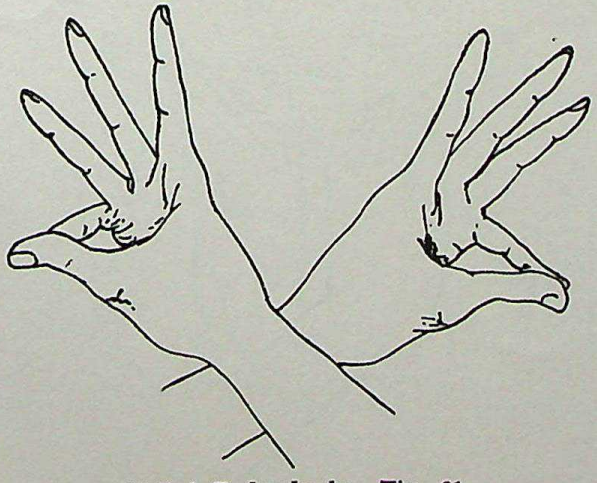


Bherunda—Fig. 59

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh



Arala Katakamukha—Fig. 60



Nalini Padmakosha—Fig. 61

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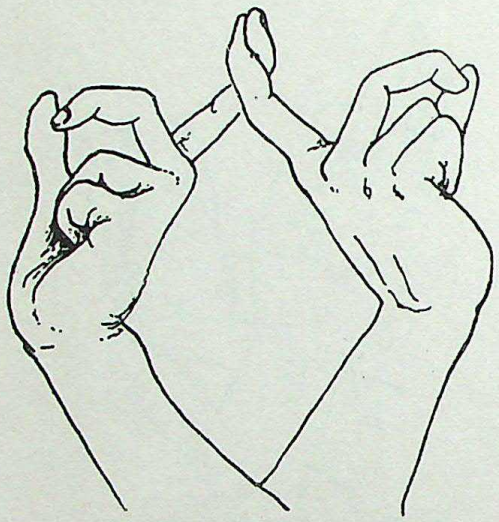
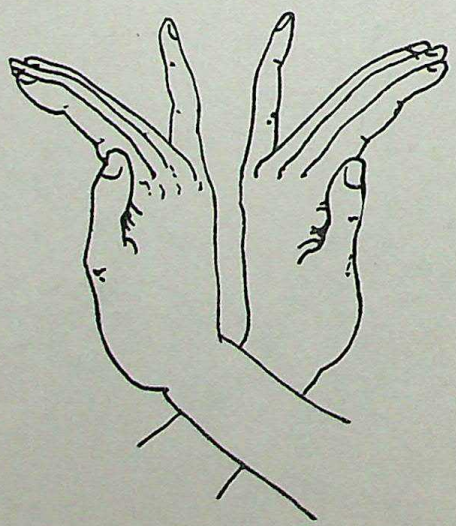
HAND GESTURES



Pasha—Fig. 62



Vardhamana—Fig. 63

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

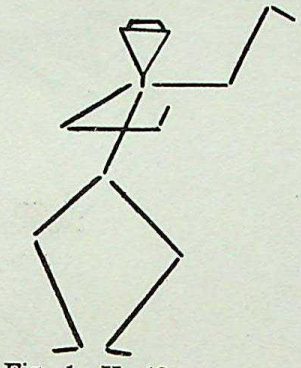


Fig. 1—K. 12

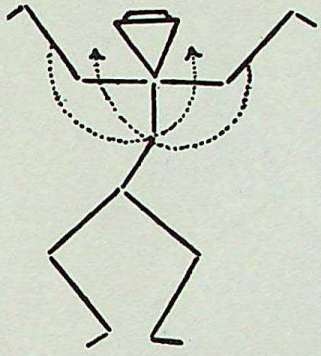


Fig. 2—K. 14

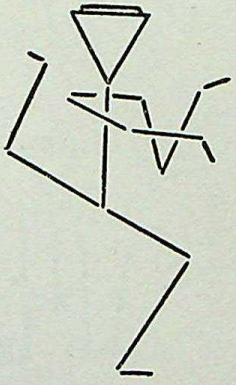


Fig. 3—K. 26

Fig 4—K. 42

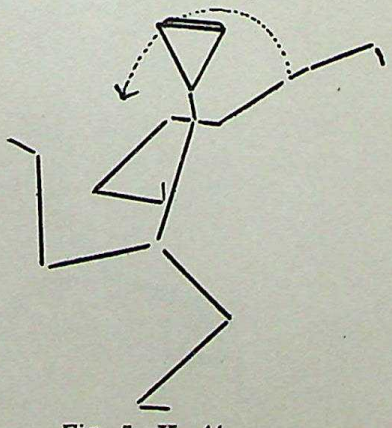


Fig. 5—K. 44

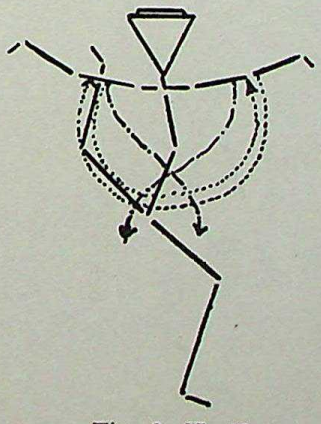


Fig. 6—K. 46

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GESTURES OF THE BODY

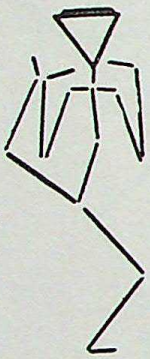

Fig. 7—K. 47

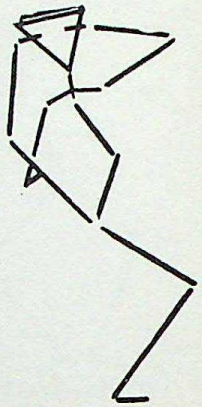

Fig. 8—K. 50

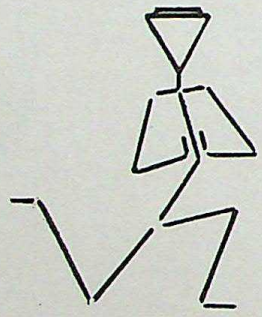

Fig. 9—K. 52.

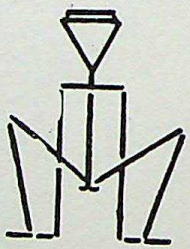

Fig. 10—K. 53

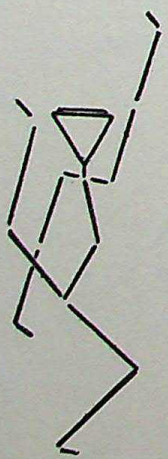

Fig. 11—K. 64

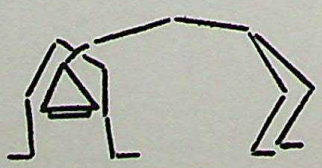

Fig. 12—K. 66

CC-0. Agamnigam Digital Presevation Foundation, Chandigarh

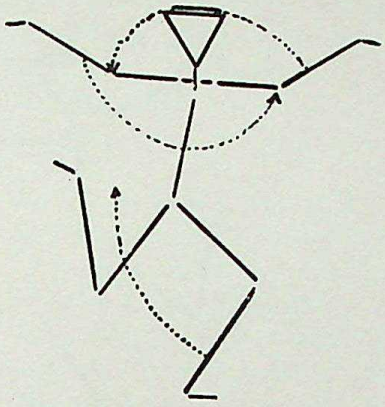

Fig. 13—K. 70

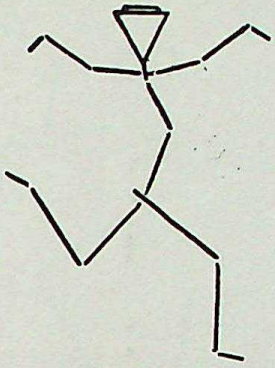

Fig. 20—K. 99

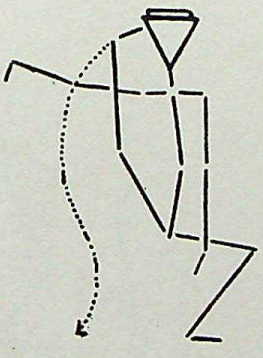

Fig. 15—K. 76

Fig. 16—K. 80

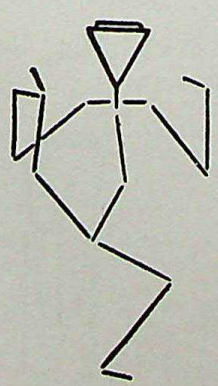

Fig. 17—K. 83

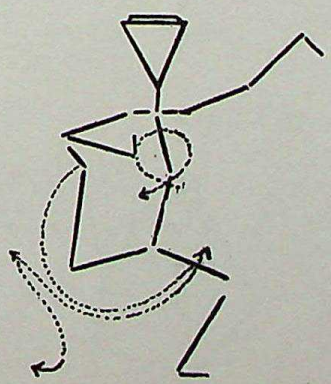

Fig. 18—K. 84

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GESTURES OF THE BODY

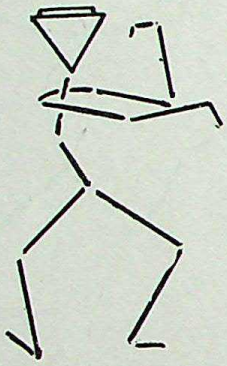

Fig. 19—K. 87

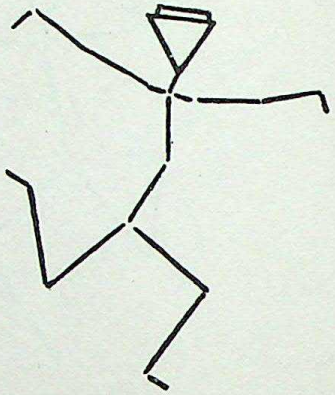

Fig. 14—K. 75

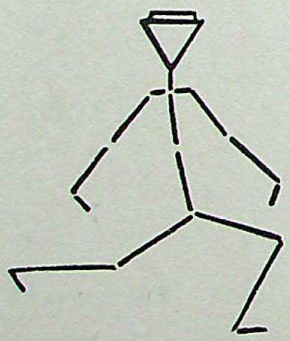

Fig. 21—K. 100

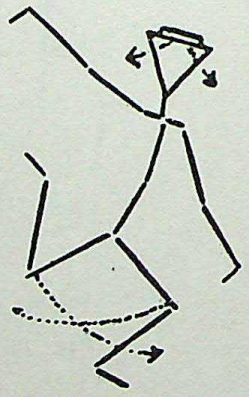

Fig. 22—K. 106

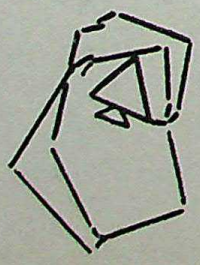

Fig. 23—K. 107

Fig. 24—K. 108

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fruit, agreement, saying 'Very well', sacrificial offering, greeting common people, carrying away, strong-hold, holding a book, running, lightness, holding a shield, fistcuff, grasping a mace or spear. Kathakali usage: charioteer prefix, loveliness, holiness, ghost, imprisonment, deserving, existence, heel or ankle, attraction, *chamara*, God of Death, mud, medicine, curse, swing, gift, circumambulation, digging, renunciation, spear, heroism, sun or fire, vomiting, giving birth, in vain, fie upon, minister, crossing, enduring, gift, permission, victory, bow, we, single, sentence, old age, robbing and food (Fig. 10).

(10) *Shikhara*: (Peak)

Usage: the God of Love (*Madan*), bow, pillar, silence, husband, tooth, entering, questioning, the body, saying-'No', recollection, intimate suggestion, untying the girdle, embrace, lover, letting fly. *Shakti* and *Tomara* weapons, sound of a bell, pounding, gratifying the ancestors, steadiness, establishing a family, hero, spire, friend, cleaning the teeth with to and from movement, playing a palmyra fan, difference, say—'What', drinking water from a spouted vessel, the number 4, enjoying consequences, demure attitude of an amorous girl, bashfulness, permanent mood (*sthayi bhava*), *vinayaka*, *mahisha mardini*, heroism, galloping of a horse, half-moon, brow-spot, making the sign of the hair knot, sapphire, intensity etc. Kathakali usage: roaming, legs, eyes, sight, way, search, ear, drink, hands, wonder, time and wheels (Fig. 11).

(11) *Kapiththa*: (Elephant apple)

Usage: Lakshmi, Saraswati, winding, holding cymbals, milk, king, cows, collyrium, holding flowers at the time of dalliance, grasping the end of a robe, veiling the head with *anchala* or the end of a cloth offering, incense or lights, churning out *Lakshami* from depth of sea (Samudra *manthan* scene), spreading cowries, holding elephant goad, or Vajra or a sling, showing a dance (*natya*), holding a lotus of dalliance (*lilahja dharana*), counting *Saraswati's* rosary, pounding barley, etc. Kathakali usage: trap or rein, doubt, feather of a peacock, drink, touch, going back, outside, back, descending and footstep (Fig. 12).

(12) *Katakamukha*: (Opening in a link)

Usage: picking flowers, holding a garland of flowers or a pearl, drawing a bow slowly, distributing folded betel leaves, applying such things as musk or scent, speech, glancing, holding a fly whisk, drawing out an arrow, holding out a mirror, reins, conveyance, breaking a twig, cleaning the teeth, picking flowers, embrace of harlots, holding a discus or a fan, etc. Kathakali usage: coat, servant, hero, wrestler, shooting an arrow and arrest (Fig. 21).

(13) *Shuchi*: (Needle)

Usage: one *Parabrahma*, demonstration, one hundred, sun, city, world, saying, 'thus' or 'what'? or 'he', fan, threatening, pining away, rod, the

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body, astonishment, braid of hair, umbrella, capability, down, beating the drum, turning the potter's wheel, wheel, circle, explanation, evening, boastings, truth-telling, pointing to a distant country, life, going in front, one, the twilights, solitude, lotus stalk, saying 'Sadhu', looking at things, world, unity, turning a wheel, sunrise and sunset, arrow, secret, metal, handle, threatening, addressing inferiors, listening, yearning for the beloved, recollection, nose, beak, white colour, vision etc. (Fig. 7).

(14) *Chandrakala*: (Digit of the moon)

Usage: to indicate the crescent moon, the face, the span of the thumb and forefinger and objects of that shape, the crown of Shiva, the Ganges and a cudgel (Fig. 33).

(15) *Padmakosha*: (Lotus bud)

Usage: fruit, wood, apple, elephant apple, breast, curve, ball of flowers, light food, bud, mango, rain of flowers, cluster of flowers, the '*Japa*' flower, shape of a bell, hole of a snake, water lily, egg, trunk of an elephant, brilliance, vessel of gold or silver, coil of hair, moderation, charm, saying—'*sadhu*' cocoanut, *karnikara*, mirror, bending bough, pot, opening of a flower (Fig. 15).

(16) *Sarpashirsha*: (Snake-head)

Usage: sandal paste, snake, slowness, sprinkling, cherishing, giving water to gods and sages, flapping of elephant ears, message of wrestlers, rouge (*kumkuma*), mud, *pranayama*, (to indicate *pranayama*, the Sarpashirsha hand is held upon the bridge of the nose precisely as in the daily ritual of regulated breathing), washing the face, occasion of charity, elephant, short man, shoulders, fondling, milk, water, saffron, bashfulness, concealing a child, image, drinking water, clinging, saying 'Very True', saying—'It is proper', answering, sprinkling sandal powder, holding the breasts of women, etc. Kathakali usages tally more or less with the above (Fig. 22).

(17) *Mrigashirsha*: (Deer-head)

Usage: women, cheek, traditional manners, fear, discussion, costume of an actor, place of residence, *tete-a-tete*, drawing three lines on the brow, patterns on the ground, massage of feet, coming, holding an umbrella, stair, placing the feet, calling the beloved, roaming, *padmini*, *shankhini* or *hastini* women, slowness, applying sandal paste etc., gestures of women, screen, self-manifestation, order, consideration, deer-face, indicating one's self, body. Kathakali usage: deer, supreme being (Fig. 8).

(18) *Simha-Mukha*: (Lion-face)

Usage: coral, pearl, fragrance, stroking the hair, drop of water, salvation, when placed on the heart, '*home*', hare, elephant, waving *kusha* grass, lotus garland, lion-face, testing the preparation of medicine (Fig. 30).

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(19) *Kangula*: (Til)

Usage: same as Kangula, Lakucha fruit, breast of a young girl, white water lily, partridge, areca-nut, little bell, pill, 'Cataka', grapes, 'Rudraksh', seeds, holding the chin, breast-bud, blue lotus, fruit, coral, mouthful, asterism, jujube-fruit, circle, anything small, hailstone (Fig. 16).

(20) *Chatura*:

Usage. musk, a little, gold, copper, iron, wet, sorrow, aesthetic pleasure, eye, difference of castes, proof, sweetness, slow gait, breaking to pieces, face, oil or ghee (Fig-20).

(21) *Bhramara*: (Bee)

Usage: bee, parrot, wing, crane, cuckoo, similar birds. Kathakali usage: feather, song, water umbrella, ear of elephant, Gandharva birth, fear, weeping etc (Fig. 13).

(22) *Sola-Padma*:

Usage: full-blown lotus, elephant-apple, turning, breast, yearning for the beloved, mirror, full moon, a beautiful vessel, hair-knot, moon (Fig. 17).

(23) *Samdamsa*: (Grasping)

Usage: generosity, sacrificial offerings, insect, apprehension, worship, the number 5, tooth, small, bud, singing, gentle dances, exegesis, *gyana mudra*, scales, flaw in a tooth, sacred thread, line, examining, painting pictures, truth, saying—'No', saying—'A little', moment, listening, testing metals etc., on the touchstone, shining white, taking aim, nail, sprout, *Gunja* seed, the number 8, fire-fly, poison, blades of grass, red ants, mosquito, eclipse, collecting pearls, bug, fly, garland, down, pointing, solitude, touching, *Veda*, snow, speaking, slipping, curring off, a wound, brow-spot, collyrium, slowness (Fig. 18).

(24) *Hamsasya*: (Swan-beak)

Usage: blessing the festival, tying with thread, ascertaining with instruction, horripilation, pearls, putting forward the wick of a lamp, touchstone, jasmine, the act of painting, dyke, impeding a current. Kathakali usage: eye-ball, soft, dust, pale, white, blue, red, mercy, tuft of hair or a line of hair on the abdomen, the first rain, hair, the three folds of skin above the navel of a woman etc. (Fig. 9).

(25) *Hamsapaksha*: (Swan-wing)

Usage: the number 6, construction of a bridge, putting the nail marks, covering, sheath. Kathakali usage: moon, Cupid, wind, *god*, mountain, summit, everlasting, relation, bedding, rock, enjoyment, breast, cloth, conveyance, false-hood, lying down, fall, people, beating, covering, spreading, founding, coming, bowing down, bathing, sandal paste, embracing, following, protecting, reading, mace, cheek, shoulder, hair, obedient, blessing,

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sage, thus, fish, worship, tortoise, you, sword, wrath, now, I, in front, axe, flame, call, getting on the lap, prevent etc. (Fig. 14).

(26) *Mukula*: (Bud)

Usage: water lily, eating, the God of Love, holding a seal, navel, plantain flower, charity, prayer, humble speech, lotus bud, self, life, the number 5, behaviour of an amorous woman, kissing, children, worshipping the gods, umbrella, bud, accepting fruits. Kathakali usage: jackal, monkey, fading, forgetting, etc. (Fig. 23).

(27) *Tamrachuda*: (Red crest i.e., cock)

Usage: cock, crane, camel, calf, writing or drawing the three worlds, trident, wiping away tears, the number 3, the three *Vedas*, wood-apple leaf, rubbing down a horse, leaf, panel, *phalaka* (Fig. 19).

(28) *Trisula*: (Trident)

Usage: wood-apple leaf, three together (Fig. 34).

(29) *Vyaghra*: (Tiger)

Usage: tiger, frog, monkey, mother of pearl (Fig. 35).

(30) *Ardhasuchi*: (Half-needle)

Usage: sprout, young bird, large insect (Fig. 36).

(31) *Kataka*:

Usage: calling and moving. Kathakali usage: Vishnu, Krishna, Balabhadra, arrow, gold, silver, female demon, sleep, lady in prominence, Shri or wealth, Vina or lute, star, garland, lotus, demon, crown, iron club, particular, chariot, with, flower, mirror, female, *homa*, sweat, little, who which or what, quiver, fragrance, etc. (Fig. 28).

(32) *Palli*

Usage: a village or a hut (Fig. 37).

(33) *Urnanabha*: (Spider)

Usage: scratching the head, theft, *Narasimha*, face of a deer, lion, monkey, tortoise, *karnikara*, breast, fear etc. Kathakali usage: horse, fruit, leopard, butter, ice, abundance, lotus, etc. (Fig. 29).

(34) *Bana*: (Arrow)

Usage: the number 6, *nala nritya* (Fig. 38).

A few remarkable points are to be mentioned here. The description laid down in *Abhinaya Darpana* about *langula* and *kartarimukha* are the same. Kangula should be as described in another version. *Ardhasuchi* as described in *Abhinaya Darpana* is not artistic, nor it seems to be of a half-needle shape. It should be as described in another version.

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The following are the hand gestures mentioned only in *Kathakali*:

(1) *Mudra*:

Usage: growth, movement, heaven, sea, thick, forgetting, all, announcement, thing, death, meditation, sacred threads, straight, mind, thinking desire, self, recollection, knowledge, creation, life, disgrace, future, negative, the number 4, (Fig. 24).

(2) *Pallava*:

Usage: *vajra*, summit of a mountain, ears of a cow, length of the eye, buffalo, iron club, spear, horn, circling, distance, leaf, smoke, tail, rattan, paddy etc. (Fig. 25).

(3) *Mukura*:

Usage: tusk or fang, separation, part of the leg from the ankle to the knee, the buttock of a woman, Veda, brother, pillar, mortar, rapid or violent, devil, growth or nourishment, enemy, beetle, ray, anger, excellent, bangle, neck, armlet, negative etc (Fig. 26).

(4) *Vardhamana*:

Usage: earrings of a female, jewelled garland, knee, contemplating sage, drum, elephant driver, whirlpool, navel, well, etc (Fig. 27).

The following are the gestures with Combined Hands (*Samyuta Hastas*):

(1) *Anjali*: (salutation)

Usage: obedience, clapping time indicating the form of Shiva, saying- "What am I to do?, meditation, etc. Kathakali usage: heavy rain, fire, vomiting, stream, vibration, brightness, hair, earring, heat or sorrow, confusion, always, river-bathing, flowing blood, anger, conch etc. (Fig. 39).

(2) *Kapota*:

Usage: taking oath, conversation with elders, humble acquiescence, cocoanut tree, arecanut tree, plantain flower, cold, nectar, receiving things, casket, citron etc. (Fig. 40).

(3) *Karkata*: (Crab)

Usage: group, stoutness, blowing the conch, stretching the limbs, bending the bow of a tree, lamentation, yawning, breathing hard, crab, cracking the fingers of a woman, etc (Fig. 41).

(4) *Swastika*:

Usage: crocodile, timid speech, dispute, praising (Fig. 42).

(5) *Dola*: (Swing)

Two Pataka hands are placed on the thighs. Usage: beginning a Natya, infatuation, fainting, drunken, indolence, welcoming the beloved etc.

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(6) *Pushpaputa*: (Flower casket)

Usage: offering and receiving flowers, corns, fruits or water, offering lights (*Arati*), flower spell etc. (Fig. 43).

(7) *Utsanga*: (Embrace). *Mrigashirsha*, hands held upon opposite armpits.

Usage: embrance, modesty, armlet, education of children, cold, saying '*sadhu*', hiding the breasts, etc.

(8) *Shiva-Linga*

Usage: Shiva-Linga (Fig. 44).

(9) *Kataka Vardhana*:

Usage: link, deliberation, the erotic flavour, pacification, the dances known as jakkari, natana, danda, lasya, certainty, coronation, ritual (*puja*), marriage, blessing etc. (Fig. 45).

(10) *Kartari-Swastika*: (Crossed arrowshafts)

Usage: trees, the boughs of trees, the summit of hill etc. (Fig. 46).

(11) *Shakata*: (Car)

Usage: the gestures of Rakshasas (Fig. 47).

(12) *Garudapaksha*: (*Garuda* wing)

Ardha-chandra hands held at the sides of the hips extended upwards. Usage: waist, string, superiority.

(13) *Nishedha*: (Warning).

Usage: establishing the conclusion of an agreement, truth, saying- "Verily", holding the nipples, *Anga-Puja*, etc. (Fig. 48).

(14) *Shankha*: (Conch shell)

Shankha as described in *Natya Shastra* is more picturesque, accurate and resembles a conch (Fig. 49).

(15) *Chakra*:

Usage: wheel (Fig. 50).

(16) *Gamputa*:

Usage: for covering things and in representing a box (Fig. 51).

(17) *Pasha*:

Usage: mutual qarrel, a string, a chain etc. (Fig. 62).

(18) *Kilaka*:

Usage: affection, jocose talk etc. (Fig. 53).

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(19) *Matsya:*

Usage: fish (Fig. 54)

(20) *Kurma*:

Usage: tortoise (Fig. 55)

(21) *Varaha*:

Usage: boar (Fig. 56).

(22) *Garuda*:

Usage: bird '*Garuda*' (Fig. 57).

(23) *Nagabandha*:

Sarpashirsha and Swastika hands placed together. Usage: the coil of a snake.

(24) *Khatwa*: (Cot)

Usage: bedstead of a litter (Fig. 58).

(25) *Bherunda*:

Usage: pair of birds (Fig. 59).

(26) *Makara*:

Usage: sea, overflowing, river, deer, face, prosperity, solidity, platform, crocodile etc. (Fig. 52).

(27) *Vardhamana*: (Increase)

Usage: modesty, smile, torments, horns, difference, consideration, etc. (Fig. 63).

(28) *Viprakirna*: (Loose)

Swastika hands quickly separated.
Usage: drawing away the end of the robe (*Chelanchala*), releasing.

(29) *Arala-Katakamukha*:

Usage: giving pieces of betel leaf (Fig. 60).

(30) *Suchasya*: (Needle-face)

Suchi hands are moved aside from the front simultaneously. Usage: saying—'What am I to do?' yearning for the beloved, saying—'Everything' or 'Look here'.

(31) *Ardha Rechita*:

Of two *Rechita* hands, one is held palm downwards. Usage: invitation, giving presents, concealing actions, etc.

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(32) *Kesha-Bandha*: (Tying the hair)

Pataka hands binding the hair. Usage: gem-pillar, binding the hair, cheek etc.

(33) *Mushthi-Swastika*

Mushthi hands are crossed on the stomach. Usage: playing ball, bashfulness, boxing, tying the girdle etc.

(34) *Nalini-Padmakosha*

Usage: *Nagabandha* buds, making equal distribution, cluster of flowers, the number 10, *Ganga*, *Bherunda* etc. (Fig. 61).

(35) *Urdhestitals-Padma*:

Alapadma hands are held on the chest and twisted upwards. Usage: husband, humble words, the breasts, full blown lotus, saying, 'I am beloved', conversation, indicating desires etc.

(36) *Ulbana*: (Abundance)

Alapadma hand held close to the eyes. Usage: larger cluster of flowers, eyes etc.

(37) *Lalita*:

Alapadma hands crossed near the head. Usage: *Sal* tree, mountain etc.

The peculiarity with the Kathakali combined hand gestures is that the names do not occur either in *Abhinaya Darpana* or in *Natya Shastra*.

Hands Relating Relationships

(1) *Dampati*: (Husband and wife)

Left hand *shikhara*, right hand *Mriga-Shirsha*, indicating female and male.

(2) *Matai*: (Mother)

Left hand *ardhachandra*, right hand *samdamsa*, the left hand then placed on the stomach, showing the *stri* hand, indicating mother and daughter. The *stri* (woman) hand is not separately described, but it will be seen that it consists in placing either hand on the stomach, indicating the womb.

(3) *Pitri*: (Father)

Following the last hand, the right hand is held as *shikhara*, indicating the father or son-in-law.

(4) *Swashru*: (Mother-in-law)

The right hand *hamsasya* and *samdamsa* at the throat, the left hand

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then placed on the stomach showing the *stri* hand.

(5) *Swasura*: (Father-in-law)

Following the left hand is shown as *shikhara*.

(6) *Bhartur-Bhratri*: (Brother-in-law)

Husband's brother. The left hand *shikhara*, the right hand *Kartari-mukha* at the side.

(7) *Nananda*: (Sister-in-law)

Following the *bhartur-bhratri* hand, the *stri* hand is shown with the left or the *mrigashirsa*.

(8) *Jyeshtha-Kanishtha Bhratri*: (Elder or younger brother).

The *mayura* hand is shown forward and backwards.

(9) *Shrusha*: (Daughter-in-law)

Following the last the *stri* hand is shown with the right.

(10) *Bhartri*: (Husband)

Hamsasya and *shikhara* hand are held at the throat.

(11) *Sapatni*: (Co-wife)

The *pasha* hand is shown first and then *stri* with both hands.

(12) *Putra*: (Son)

Samdamsa on the belly, and moving it afterwards and holding the *shikhara* by the left hand.

Those not mentioned are to be inferred according to the circumstances.

Deva Hands (Deva Vibhavana)

Hands that indicate forms which accord with the character and actions of Bramha and other gods.

(1) *Bramha*: Left hand *chatura*, right hand *hamsasya*.
(2) *Shambhu*: Left hand *mriga shirsha*, right hand *tripataka*. *Abhinaya Darpana* states as Shiva.
(3) *Vishnu*: *Tripataka* with both hands.
(4) *Saraswati*: Left hand *ardhachandra*, right hand *suchi* or according to some *kapiththa*.
(5) *Parvati*: *Ardhachandra* with both hands, the left upward, the right downward, making *abhaya* and *varada* (fear not and charity).
(6) *Lakshmi*: Two *kapiththa* hands held at the shoulders. 'Held at the shoulders' is to be understood in the case of all the *deva* hands unless otherwise indicated.

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(7) *Ganesha*; *Kapiththa* with both hands placed on the thighs and according to *Mirror of Gestures* which terms the deity as "Vijneshwara", two *kapiththa* hands held forward.
(8) *Kartikeya*: *Trishula* left hand, shikhara right hand.
(9) *Sanmukha*: Left hand *trisula*, right hand *shikhara* held upwards.
(10) *Manmatha*: Left hand *shikhara*, right hand *kataka*.
(11) *Indra*: *Tripataka* hands crossed.
(12) *Yama*: Left hand *pasha*, right hand *suchi*.
(13) *Agni*: *Tripataka* right hand, *kangula* left hand.
(14) *Varuna*: Left hand *pataka*, right hand *shikhara*. *Mirror of Gestures* states just in the reverse order although without authority.
(15) *Nairita*: *Khatwa* and *shakata* hand.
(16) *Vayu*: Left hand *ardhapataka*, right hand *arala*.
(17) *Kuvera*: Left hand *padma*, right hand *Gada*.

Hands that Indicate Nine Planets

(1) *Suray*: (Sun). *Sola-padma* and *kapiththa* hands held on the shoulders.
(2) *Chandra*: (Moon). Left hand *solapadma*, right hand *pataka*.
(3) *Angarakha*: (*Mars*). Left hand *shuchi*, right hand *mushthi*.
(4) *Budha*: (Mercury). Left hand *mushthi* askew, right hand *pataka*.
(5) *Brihaspati*: (Jupiter). *Shikhara* with both hands as if holding the sacred thread.
(6) *Sukra*: (Venus). *Mushthi* with both hands, the left raised, the right downwards.
(7) *Shanaischara*: (Saturn). Left hand *sarpashirsha*, right hand *trishula*.
(8) *Rahu*: (Bodyless monster). Left hand *sarpashirsha*, right hand *suchi*.
(9) *Ketu*: (Serpent monster). Left hand *suchi*, right hand *ardhapataka*.

Rahu and *Ketu* are the two nodes, the positions where the eclipse takes place.

Hands of Ten Avatars of Vishnu

(1) *Matsya*: The *matsya* hand is shown, when both hands as *tripataka* are levelled at the shoulders.
(2) *Kurma*. The same as above.
(3) *Narasimha*: Left hand *simhamukha*, right hand *tripataka*.
(4) *Vamana*: *Mushthi* with both hands, one upwards and the other downwards and towards the right side.
(5) *Parashurama*: The left hand on the hip and the *ardhapataka* with the right.
(6) *Ramchandra*: Right hand *kapiththa*, left hand *shikhara*, held respectively near and far.
(7) *Balarama*: Left hand *mushthi*, right hand *pataka*.
(8) *Krishna*: Mrigasirsha hands facing one another on the shoulders.
(9) *Kalki*: Left hand *tripataka*, right hand *pataka*. *Budhdha* is omitted and

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the *Mirror of Gestures* omits Varaha, whereas *Abhinaya Darpana* mentions it as follows:

(10) *Varsha*: *Varsha* hands on the level of the waist and keep them on the sides.

(11) *Rakasa*: Both hands Shakata held on the face.

Hands Denoting Four Castes

(1) *Brahmana*: *Shikhara* with both hands as if holding the sacred thread, the right hand moving to and fro.

(2) *Kshatriya*: *Shikhara* with left hand moving to and fro, *pataka* with the right.

(3) *Vaishya*: Left hand *hamsasya*, right hand *kataka*.

(4) *Shudra*: Left hand *shikhara*, right hand *suchi*.

Hands Indicating Famous Emperors

(1) *Harishchandra*: *Shukatunda*.

(2) *Nala*: *Mayura*.

(3) *Purukutsa*: *Alapadma*.

(4) *Pururavas*: *Mushthi*.

(5) *Sagara*: *Alapadma* on the head.

(6) *Dilipa*: *Pataka*.

(7) *Ambarisha*: *Kartari*.

(8) *Shibi*: *Kapiththa* hands waved forwards.

(9) *Karttavirya*: Two *pataka* hands at the shoulders in *deva-vibhavana*.

(10) *Ravana*: The same hands with widely separated fingers.

(11) *Dharmaraja*: Hands waved near the arms.

(12) *Arjuna*: *Tripataka* moved forward again and again.

(13) *Bhima*: *Mushthi* hand moved forward.

(14) *Shaibya*: *Suchi* hand with the finger twisted upward.

(15) *Nakula*: *Kataka*,

(16) *Sahadeva*: *Shikhara*.

(17) *Nahusha*: The hand moving

(18) *Yayati*: *Tamrachuda*.

(19) *Bhagiratha*: *Ardhachandra* hand moved like *tripataka* and this is also used for an eclipse of the moon.

(20) *Mandhata* and *Martwan*: (The lords of the earth) *Mukula*, *suchi* and *mushthi* hands and the *ardhapataka* twisted upwards touching the body, these four hands are used in order.

(21) *Raghu* and *Aja*: *Ardhapataka* hands are used as aforesaid respectively right and left.

(22) *Dasharatha*: *Ardhapataka* hands crossed.

(23) *Rama*: *Shikhara* hands on the right shoulder.

(24) *Lakshmana*: The same on the left shoulder.

(25) *Shatrughna*: The same on the face.

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If these are done with left hand on the left shoulder, it indicates those of the human race.

Hands Indicating Seven Oceans

(1) *Lavana*: *Mukula* hands moved upwards and downwards representing the up and down motions of the waves.
(2) *Ikshu*: *Alapadma* hands in the same way.
(3) *Sura*: *Shankirna* and *pataka* hands in the same way.
(4) *Sarpi*: *Chatura* hands in the same way.
(5) *Dadhi*: *Tripataka* hands in the same way.
(6) *Kshira*: *Sarpashirsha* hands in the same way.
(7) *Suddhidaka*: (*Jala*) *Pataka* hands in the same way.

Hands of famous Rivers

Hands moving upwards and downwards indicate the motion of the waves. For any river the *pataka* hand is used.

(1) *Ganga*: *Tamrachuda*.
(2) *Yamuna*: *Rekha*.
(3) *Krishnaveri*: *Simhamukha*.
(4) *Kaveri*: *Chatura*.
(5) *Saraswati*: *Pataka*, *Chatura* and *Bana*.
(6) *Narmada*: *Ardhapataka*.
(7) *Tungabhadra*: *Hamsasya*.
(8) *Khetravati*. *Suchi*.
(9) *Chandrabhaga*: (Chenab). The hand moving.
(10) *Sarayu*: *Padma*.
(11) *Bhimrathi*: *Arala*.
(12) *Suvarnamukhi*: *Ardhachatura*.
(13) *Papanasini*: *Shukatunda*.
(14) The Seven Upper Worlds (*bhu*, *bhuva*, *swarga*, *jana*, *tapa*, *satya* and *maha*). The *pataka* hand twisted upward is applicable.
(15) The Seven Lower Worlds: (*Atal*, *vitala*, *sutala*, *talatala*, *mahatala*, *rasatala* and *patala*). The *pataka* hand twisted down-wards is applicable.

Hands Indicating Trees

(1) *Asvaththa*: (*Pipal*). *Alapadma* hands waving the fingers.
(2) *Kadali*: *Mukula* hands interlocked, extended and the finger waved.
(3) *Narangi*: (Orange). *Padmakosha*.
(4) *Lakucha*: *Bhramara*.
(5) *Panasa*: (Bread fruit). *Chatura*.
(6) *Vilwa*: (Wood-apple). The same.
(7) *Punnaga*: *Pataka* and *chatura*.

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(8) *Mandara*: *Khandwa chatura*.
(9) *Vakula*: *Samdamsa*.
(10) *Vata*: (Banyan). *Pataka*.
(11) *Arjuna*: *Simhamukha*.
(12) *Patali*: *Shukatunda*.
(13) *Hintala*: *Kartarimukha*.
(14) *Puga*: (Areca-nut). *Padmakosha* hands crossed.
(15) *Champaka*: *Langula* hands downwards.
(16) *Khadira*: *Tamrachuda*, face downwards.
(17) *Kami*: *Kartarimukha* interlocked.
(18) *Ashoka*: *Pataka* hands crossed i.e., touching at the wrists and freely moving to and fro.
(19) *Sindhura*: *Mayura* hands interlocked.
(20) *Amalaka*: The *samyama nayaka* hand, i.e. the forefinger and the second finger together in the middle of the palm, the rest extended.
(21) *Kuruvaka*: *Kartari* and *tripataka* hands crossed.
(22) *Kapiththa*: (Elephant apple). *Alapadma* hands crossed.
(23) *Ketaki*: (Screw pine). *Pataka* and *chatura* hands crossed at the wrists.
(24) *Simsapa*: *Ardhachandra* hands crossed.
(25) *Nimbasala*: *Shukatunda* hands crossed.
(26) *Parijata*: The *trijnana* hand, i.e., *pataka* with both hands twisted upwards.
(27) *Tintrini*: *Langula* hand.
(28) *Jambu*. *Ardhapataka* hand.
(29) *Palasa*: *Ardhachandra* hand.
(30) *Ralasa*: (Mango). The *tripataka* hand.

Hands that Indicate Animals

(1) *Simha:* (Lion). The *simhamukha* hand i.e., right hand *simhamukha* and left hand *pataka* applied to the back of the right, the fingers being freely moved.
(2) *Vyaghra*: (Tiger). The *ardhanchandra* hand held face downwards.
(3) *Varaha*: (Boar). The *sankarna makara* hand, i.e., in the aforesaid *matsya* hand the right hand is held downwards and shaken, the five fingers being severally held apart, indicating bristles.
(4) *Kapi*: (Monkey). The *adho-mushthi-mukula* hand is used, i.e., the thumb and second finger of the *mushthi* hand are joined.
(5) *Bhalluka*: (Bear). Left hand *padmakosha* face downwards, right hand *pataka* placed on the back of the left.
(6) *Marjar*. (Cat). The *ardha-mukula* hand, i.e., the thumb and third finger of the *mushthi* hand are joined.
(7) *Yak*: The hands touching at the wrists, left hand *mushthi*, right hand *mudrika*, making the *mushthi mudra* hand.
(8) *Iguana*: *Tala pataka* hand, i.e., the thumb and the little finger of the *pataka* hand are slightly raised.

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(9) *Porcupine Deer*: The *Chandra mriga* hand, i.e., the forefinger of the *mriga* hand is raised.
(10) *Mriga*: (Antelope). The *mrigashirsha* hand.
(11) *Krishna Sara*: (Black Antelope). The *mushthi mriga* hand, i.e., the thumb and little finger of the *mushthi* hand are extended.
(12) *Ashwatar*: (Mule). *Nagabandha* hands directed upwards indicating cow-ear.
(13) *Mushika*: (Mouse). The *khanda-mukula* hand, i.e., the forefinger of *mukula* hand is fully extended.
(14) *Girika*: (Mole). The *khadga-mukula* hand, i.e., the forefinger of the *mukula* hand is bent and moved to and fro (*tiryak-parsarita*).
(15) *Shashak*: (Hare). The *tala-pataka* hand is moved horizontally (*tiryak*).
(16) *Brischik*: (Scorpion). The *karkata* hand is directed downwards.
(17) *Sarmeya*: (Dog). The *madhya pataka* hand, i.e., the little finger of the *pataka* hand is bent.
(18) *Ushtro*: (Camel). The *kadanjali* hand, i.e., the thumbs of the *anjali* hand are bent and moved up and down.
(19) *Chaga*: (Goat). *shikhara* hands in contact face to face.
(20) *Gardhaba*: (Ass). The *shinonjali* hand, i.e., the forefingers of the *kadanjali* hand all bent in contacts.
(21) *Nrishabha*: (Bull). The *tal simha* (i.e., *simha mukha* with the back of the hand in the horizontal plane) hand i.e., the second and third fingers are bent to touch the palm, and the thumb placed over them and the two other fingers extended.
(22) *Gabhi*: (Cow). The *sankirna mudra* hand, i.e., the middle finger is bent and all the others extended, also indicating *yantra-bheda*.

Hands that Indicate Flying Creatures

(1) Dove: The *kapota* hand fluttered (*punkhita*).
(2) Pigeon: The same hand moved horizontally (*tiryak*).
(3) Hawk: *Shukatunda*.
(4) Owl: *Gajadanta* hands face to face in contact.
(5) *Ganda-Bherunda*: *Ardhachandra* hands face downwards, touching at the wrists, and all the fingers separated.
(6) *Cataka*: The *langula* hand fluttered.
(7) Cock: The *bhramara* hand.
(8) *Kokila*: The *arala* hand fluttered.
(9) Crow: The *samdamsa-mukula* hand i.e., the forefinger of the *bhramara* hand is placed on the thumb and fluttered.
(10) Osprey. The *suchi* hand relaxed (*apavidhdha*).
(11) Parrot: *Shukatunda* hand fluttered.
(12) Crane: (*Sarasa*). Paradise *mukula* hand, i.e., the *muku la* hand with the little finger slightly bent.
(13) Crane: (*Baka*). The mingled *hamsa* hand, i.e., the forefinger and the

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thumb joined, the second and third fingers extended and the little finger made to touch the palm, this is also used in *mantra-bheda*.

(14) Curlew: *Linala Padma* hand is used, i.e., the little finger of the *alapadma* hand is bent to touch the palm.

(15) Fire-fly: The *hamsa-mukha* hand, i.e., the thumb is joined to the topmost joint of the middle finger and the hand relaxed.

(16) Bee: (*Bhramara*). *Bhramara* hand fluttered.

(17) Swan: (*Hamsa*). *Hamsa* hand.

(18) *Chakravaka*: *Alapadma* hand fluttered.

(19) Paddy bird: (*Koyastika*). The *arala-pataka* hand, i.e., *arala* with the right hand, *pataka* with the left one and the hands touching.

(20) *Vyali*: The *vyali* hand.

The single hand and combined hand gestures are also numerous according to different texts, and mistakes are always noticed when those are practically demonstrated. So a correct hand gesture should be learnt from an expert who can demonstrate before the pupil. There is also greater scope for the dancer and a privilege is given to him that in order to show a thing which is not mentioned in the books of dancing, he can exert his brain and find out a new way, but that newly found gesture must be picturesque and not meaningless. There should be reason all the while.

Innumerable statues of gods and goddesses are found which depict certain meaningless gestures. The sculptors of these statues did not dilate much upon the traditional gestures and their interpretations, but their chief aim was to create a thing of beauty and art. The hand gestures of the following images neither express nor depict anything, but even then they are considered as the most beautiful pieces of art simply for the picturesque poses, viz., Bramha, (from Mirpur Khas, Punjab, Bronze; Gupta period, 6th Century). Avalokiteshwara (Bodhisattva, copper, gilt and jewelled, c. 11th Century) and also a bronze one of Ceylon (of 8th Century), Sundaramurti Swami, devotee of Shiva (Copper, from Polonnaruva, c. 13th Century), Parvati (Copper, South India, c. 17th Century) and so on.

Nritta Hastas

The movements of Nritta Hastas are of five kinds, viz.. upwards, downwards, on the right, on the left and to the front. The moving of hands should be in the manner of that of the feet. The left one (foot or hand) should be on the left and the right one on the right. There are thirteen Nritta Hastas viz., (1) Swastika, (2) Dola, (3) Anjali, (4) Kathakavardhana, (5) Shakata, (6) Pasha, (7) Kilaka, (8) Kapiththa, (9) Shikhara, (10) Kurma, (11) Hamsasya, (12) Alapadma and (13) Pataka.

The Nritya Hastas have a wide scope and all the hand gestures together with others invented by the dancer himself are used. But as Nritta is a baser quality of dance in which there is much of footwork and less of gestures only the above mentioned thirteen are used.

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Gestures for Worship

A few hand gestures which are neither mentioned in *Natya Shastra* nor in *Abhinaya Darpana* are given below, which may be useful for the modern dancers in giving expositions of dancing themes of worshipping some deity, viz., *Arati* and *Ganga Puja* etc.

(1) *Ankush*: The middle finger erect and the first finger bent of a *mushthi* of right hand. Usage—to purify water. (2) *Dhenu*: In an *anjali* hand the fingers of the right hand are inserted into the intervening spaces between the fingers of the left hand and then the first finger of the right hand is touched with middle of the left, the first finger of the left with the middle of the right, the small finger of the right with the third of the left and the small finger of the left with the third of the right. (3) *Avagunthana* (To veil or to hide). (4) *Galini*. (5) *Avahani* (to invoke). (6) *Sthapani* (to welcome). (7) *Sannidhapani* (to place the deity close by). (8) *Samrodhini* (to check or obstruct). (9) *Sanmukhikarani* (to bring the deity before the eyes. (10) *Leliha* (to bring life into the idol).

(1) Place the *anjali* hand horizontally and touch the two thumbs with the tips of the two third fingers. (2) To make the above hand downwards. (3) To straighten the thumbs and place one fist in front of the other. (4) To insert the thumbs into the respective fists. (5) To hold such fists horizontally.

Feet in Dance

Feet in different positions and with different movements will be described in accordance with old tradition. This (positions and movements) gives rise to *mandala* (posture), *utplavana* (flying movement or jumping). *Bhramari* (spiral movement) and *padachari* or *chari* (gait).

Mandala: (Postures). There are ten postures. (1) *Sthanka* (simple standing), (2) *Ayata* (3) *Alidha*, (4) *Pratyalidha*, (5) *Prekshana*, (6) *Prerita*, (7) *Swastika*, (8) *Motita*, (9) *Samshuchi*, and (10) *Parswashuchi*.

Sthanaka: Standing with *samapada* feet in the same line and touching the hip with *ardha-chandra* hands.

Ayata: Standing with $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubit apart from each other in a *Chaturasra* posture and at the same time bending knees and placing one of them upon the other.

Alidha: Place the left foot before the right one at a distance of one cubit and half, make the *shikhara* with the left on and *kataka-mukha* with the right.

Pratyalidha: When hands and feet are interchanged in the *Alidha* posture.

Prekshana: Putting one foot by the side of another heel and having *Kurma* hands.

Prerita: Putting one foot violently (on the earth) at a distance of one cubit and half from one another and standing with knees bent and one of

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put across another and them holding *shikhara* hand on the breast and showing *pataka* hand stretched out.

Swastika: The right foot is put across the left one and the right hand across the left.

Motita: Stand on the ground with the fore part (toes) of the feet and touch the earth with each knee alternately and make *tripataka* with both hands.

Samashuchi. A posture in which the earth is touched with toes and knees.

Parswashuchi: A posture in which the ground is touched with toes and one knee on one side.

Simple postures are of six kinds according to the placing of the feet. They are:

Varieties of simple postures

(1) Samapada, (2) Ekapada, (3) Nagabandha, (4) Andra (5) Garuda, and (6) Bramha.

Sampada: Standing with two feet alike. Usage offering flowers (to God) and playing in the role of gods.

Ekapada: Standing with one foot and laying the other across the knee of that foot. Usage—motionlessness and the practice of penance (*tapasya*).

Nagabandha: Standing like a serpent intertwining two feet and two hands together. Usage—showing *nagabandha*.

Andra: Standing with one leg bent and the other leg and knee raised and hands hanging naturally. Usage—*Indra*, king.

Garuda: In the *alidha* posture one knee is put on the ground and the two hands jointly show the gesture. Usage—*Garuda*.

Bramha: Sitting with one foot on one knee and another foot on the other one. Usage—'*Japa*' and similar matters.

Different kinds of Jumps (*Utplavana*)

There are five kinds of jumps, viz., Alaga, Kartari, Ashwa, Motita and Kripalaga.

Alaga: Jumping with both feet and placing *shikhara* hand on the hip at the same time.

Kartari: Jumping on toes with *kartari* hands held behind the left foot at the same time.

Ashwa: First jump on then place them together and make *tripataka* with both the hands.

Motita: Jumping on both sides alternately like a *Kartari*.

Kripalaga: Place the heel of both feet alternately on the hip and keep *ardhachandra* hands between the two.

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Various Spiral Movements (*Bhramari*)

There are seven such movements: Utpluta, Chakra, Garuda, Ekapada, Kunchita, Akasha and Anga.

Utpluta: If a person moves round his entire body from a *sampada* posture.

Chakra: If keeping feet on earth and carrying *tripataka* hands one moves rapidly.

Garuda: Stretch one foot across another and put the knee on the ground and then move about rapidly with outstretched arms.

Ekapada: Moving round alternately on one foot.

Kunchita: Moving round with knees bent.

Akasha: If one moves round his entire body after making his fully-stretched feet wide apart in jump.

Anga: If one jumps with feet half cubit apart and then stops.

There are eight *charis*, viz., Chalana, Chakramana, Sarana, Vegini, Kuttana, Lunthita, Lolita and Vishama.

(1) *Chalana*: (Walking) Advancing a foot from its nutural place.

(2) *Chakramana*: (Making a leap). A gait made by two feet carefully raised up and thrown sideways alternately.

(3) *Sarana*: (Moving). Moving like a leach, i.e., covering ground by joining one heel with another (at each step) and holding at the same time *pataka hands*.

(4) *Vegini*: (Running). If a *nata* walks swiftly on his heels or toes or by his entire sole and holds *alapadma* and *tripataka* hands alternately he is said to go with *Vegini*.

(5) *Kuttana*: (Pounding). The striking of the earth with the heel or the forepart of a foot or the entire sole

(6) *Lunthita*: (Rolling). Performing the *kuttana* from the *swastika* posture.

(7) *Lolita*: (Trembling). Slowly moving a foot which has not touched the earth after performing the Kuttana as described before.

(8) *Vishama*: (Rough). Setting the left foot to the right of the right one and the right foot to the left one alternately at the time of walking.

Different Kinds of Stepping

There are ten kinds of stepping, viz., Hansi, Mayuri, Mrigi, Gajalila, Turangini, Simhi, Bhujangi, Manduki, Veera, Manavi. (Goose, peacock, deer, elephant, horse, lion, snake, frog, heroic, and human.)

(1) Goose-step: Placing slowly one foot after another at a distance of half a cubit and bending on two sides alternately and carrying the *tripataka* with both hands.

(2) Peacock-step: To stand on toes and to carry *kapiththa* in both the hands and to move both the knees alternately.

(3) Deer-step: Running forward or sideways like a deer with *tripataka*

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on both the hands.

(4) Elephant-step: To walk slowly with *samapada* feet with hands holding *pataka* on both sides.

(5) Horse-step: To raise the right foot and jump in quick succession and to hold the *shikhara* with the left hand and *pataka* with the right.

(6) Lion-step: First stand on toes and then jump forward swiftly and proceed in this manner with the *shikhara* held in both the hands.

(7) Snake-step: Holding the *tripataka* with both the hands and both sides and walking as before (swiftly).

(8) Frog-step: Holding the *shikhara* with both the hands and jumping almost like a lion.

(9) Heroic-step: Coming from a distance holding the *shikhara* with the left hand and the *pataka* with the right one.

(10) Human-step: Going round in quick succession and putting the left hand on the waist holding the *katakamukha* with the right hand.

A few useful tips should be given at this stage. *Mandalas*, *Utplavanas*, *Bhramaris*, *Charis* and *Gatis*, according to their relation to one-another, are endless in number and variety. Use of these in dance and drama are to be learnt from the experts and teachers

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42. The Poona MS. which has been held as a later compilation only from several books instead of the original one.
43. *Manasara*, ch 67, last sloka.
44. See Abanindra Nath Tagore, op. cit, *Some Notes on Indian Artistic Anatomy*, published by the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Calcutta 1914.
45. *Natya Shastra*, Ch. IV.
46. The slokas have already been translated in Tandava Laksanam by B.V. Narayana Swami Naidu, who fails to explain the technicnl terms. I have tried to explain fully the gestures and the movements for the convenienec of the readers and the dancers. K. stands for Karana and the numbers are Karana numbers as given in *Natya Shastra*.
Ragini Devi in her book *Nrittanjali* does not draw out any distinction between male and female postures in "Tribhanga".

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PART II

SCHOOLS AND STYLES

Bharata Natyam

☐

Kathakali

☐

Kuchipudi—The Temple Dance of Andhra

☐

Yakshagana of Karnataka

☐

Odissi : Dance of Orissa

☐

Manipuri

☐

Kathak—The Classical Dance of North India

☐

Tagore School of Lyrical Dance

☐

Uday Shankar's School of Dance

☐

Folk Dances

☐

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BHARATA NATYAM

AMONG the classical dances, viz., Kathak, Manipuri, Kathakali and others, which are prevalent in India in the present age, Bharata Natyam of the South is in the fore-front and occupies a high rank. Bearing the mythological and traditional basis in mind and comparing Bharata Natyam to other types of dancing, it becomes obvious that Bharata Natyam possesses a more ancient origin.

For our convenience to trace the history and origin of Bharata Natyam, we can safely divide our sources into three main divisions, viz., (i) prevalent story in South India, (ii) evidence from scriptures, and (iii) other sources, viz., gestures, dress, etc.

There is a story prevalent even now among the people of Mangalore district that Bharata Natyam type of dancing was first taught by Arjun in the disguise of Vrihannala to Uttara, the daughter of King Virata.[1] The story is in the *Mahabharata*: After the defeat of the Pandavas in the dice play against Duryodhan, their cousin, the Pandavas were exiled to the South. The South was the place where disgraced persons and culprits used to be banished (as Rama in the *Ramayana*). Evidently the *Pandavas*, when banished, went to the South and to the kingdom of Matsya Desha, which was situated in the South of Delhi. There Arjun taught this art to the daughter of the king of Matsya Desha or Virata.

We are unable to find any trace of Arjun's source of learning this art, or this particular type of dancing, viz., Bharata Natyam. From Virata Raja's court this type of dancing must have spread throughout Southern India, and to Orissa.

Arjun was an artist *par excellence*. We find the testimony of his talents in his travels and adventures. Once Arjun went to the Heavens, and for his reception there was a great musical festival, which was arranged by *Chitrasena*, the chief painter in Indra's court. Urvashi's dance performance was highly appreciated by Arjun, and on seeing this Indra sent Urvashi to Arjun. But Arjun on the other hand, acknowledged her as his Guru (teacher), because to his judgment she knew the art better than him. When Urvashi came to Arjun, he addressed her as his mother and teacher, and did not comply with her amorous wishes.[2]

Secondly, we find that Arjun generally chose his mates among

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artistes. Once during his pilgrimage he reached the Mahendra hills, and arrived at the city of Manipur in the Deccan.[3] Chitrabhanu was the king of Manipur, who had a daughter by the name of Chitrangada. Chitrangada was obviously an artiste as her name signifies.[4] It is just possible that Arjun was attracted by Chitrangada's artistic temperament and possibly might have taught the art of Bharata Natyam type of dancing, and from Chitrangada this type might have spread throughout the length and breadth of the Deccan, and even to Orissa, which took its shape as Odissi dance (to be discussed later).

Another possible clue of this type of dancing can be had from another consort of Arjun, Ulupi. Ulupi was the daughter of Pundarika, the king of the serpents, whose kingdom was Nagaloka in Patala. *Patala* means the South and surely the snakes used to live in the jungles of the South. The snakes are also lovers of music and they themselves are believed to dance with ecstasy when they hear any tune. It is possible that Ulupi learnt the art from Arjun and handed it down to the people of the South.

This is further confirmed by the law of inheritance amongst the Devadasis in Southern India. A few years ago before the complete abolition of the Devadasi, the practice of a Devadasi not getting herself married but living under the care and in the house of her parents, was in vogue. She used to marry temporarily, and her children belonged to her father's and not to her temporary husband's family, and she was also a claimant of her father's property.[5] Apparently the right of a daughter to this kind of inheritance in violation of the ordinary canons of Hindu Law is a point which has never yet been actually settled by the civil courts, but the revenue authorities have frequently registered the *patta* of a deceased ryot in the name of his Devadasi daughter, the more distant kindred who would in ordinary circumstances have succeeded having freely admitted her claims to be equal to those of a son. The children of a Devadasi are legitimate, and neither they nor their mother are treated as being in any way inferior to their fellows.[6]

This is peculiar that even after Arjun's marriage with Chitrangada, Arjun did not take his wife along with him to his own place in Northern India, but left her at her father's place to inherit his kingdom, and also her son, Vavruvahana, to inherit his grandfather's (mother's father's) property. Most probably Chitrangada was Devadasi herself, or belonged to the same caste, and the same law which exists even now, also existed in the time of the *Mahabharata*. The Devadasis practise *Bharata Natyam* dance even today. Chitrangada as a Devadasi knew this type of dancing and probably this has been handed down from generations. Either Chitrangada learnt it before her marriage or learnt after it from Arjun.

For documentary evidence we have to examine the well-known codified treatise of dance and drama and the encyclopaedia of Indian traditional art, *Bharata Natya Sastra*. The nomenclature of this type of dancing takes its origin directly from this scripture of dance, whereas other classical dances do not. It is noteworthy that this is absolutely peculiar for this type of dance to copy the title from the *Natya Sastra*, which clearly

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shows closest affinity of *Bharata Natyam* with the rules prescribed in that book of dance and drama. Some scholars are of opinion that the actual existence of Bharata Muni (sage), the so-called compiler of the book, is doubtful. We are not to examine here whether Bharata Muni existed or not, but unquestionably we have the work before us. The book exists, and the rules therein have the closest resemblance to those in the Bharata Natyam art.

There are others, who advocate that Bharata comes from three letters, *Bha*, *Ra* and *Ta*. The first word stands for *Bhava* or *Rasa*, flavour, which is the inner feeling nourishing one or other of the nine kinds of Rasas in dance or aesthetic emotions and sentiments. *Ta* stand for *Tala*, time or rhythmic beatings and pulsations, and the word, *Ra* is diminutive of Ragini or Raga, melody and tune.[7] The book Natya Sastra is an embodiment of all these three essentialities of dance and likewise Bharata Natyam also enjoys the same elements.

There are still others who hold that Bharata means *nata* or an actor. Hence the meaning of the book is a treatise on dance which should be practised by an actor. We are not at all hampered in our investigation even if we attribute this meaning to the work. The creation is ancient no matter who created it and Bharata Natyam follows mostly the enumerations laid down in the book.[8]

If we go deep into the things and critically analyse the different Karanas (body movements), gestures (*mudras*) of every limb of the dancing body, which are enumerated in the Natya Sastra and compare them to those demonstrated in a thoroughly authentic, pure and original demonstration of Bharata Natyam, we find the closest similarity.

Bharata Natyam, originally, is a dance meant for and practised by women. As it is performed by Chitrangada and Vrihannala (man in disguise of a woman), both women, and are characters of the ancient mythology, the origin of the dance can be traced back to the *Mahabharata*.

Undoubtedly the painters and sculptors of the past derived their inspirations from dancing and executed the dance poses in sculpture and painting. When the dance art went into oblivion, and was not practised by the artistes, painters, and sculptors did not get the opportunity of seeing dance performances and consequently had no such themes to work upon. But the creations by them done previously, after seeing and deriving inspiration from the dancers, in their turn are the subject matter of the dancers who come after the painters and sculptors. The dance poses of those sculptures have a clear resemblance to those exhibited in Bharata Natyam. This clearly shows that Bharata Natyam type of dancing existed at the time when these reputed artistes created their works.

Consequently Bharata Natyam is the art from which all typically Indian forms of dancing have sprung.

The history of Hindu period tells us that the Hoysala Ballalas had supreme sway in Mysore in about 1000 A.D. to 1300 A.D. Several temples were erected by them. Among them the temple at Belur, in the centre of

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the province, owed its origin apparently to Vishnuvardhana, in or about 1117 A.D., the last and greatest at a place called Dorasamudra—now known as Halebeid, ten miles east by north from the last named, to which the capital was moved by Vishnuvardhana about 1135 A.D. It continued to be the metropolis of the kingdom, till it was destroyed and the building of the great temple stopped by the Muhammedan invasion in 1310-1311 A.D.[9] A *Mahamandap* or big platform of black marble slab was constructed by Vishnuvardhana for his Queen Nritya Saraswati, so that she should dance on the platform before the gods. The Queen Nritya Saraswati was famed as the foremost dancer of her time, and crowds were thrilled by the poetry of her movements and poses as she performed on a great smooth circular slab of black marble before the presiding deity of this "sacred theatre", the God Chenna Kesava.

After this we lose the connecting link of this type of dancing probably because of the Muhammedan influence. The Muhammedans did not give encouragement to this art. But undoubtedly, this art was practised by the people and handed down from generation to generation.

We again get a graphic and systematic history of this art since roughly a hundred years. The plan on which Bharata Natyam recitals are given in these days was determined about hundred years ago by the three famous dance experts of Pandanallur—Ponnayya, Vadivelu and Sivanandan. After them we come down to the great artiste and exponent of the art in Guru Minakshi Sundaram Pillai. The more recent masters and experts of this dance who have increased and improved the art on a cultural basis are Rukmini Devi, Bala Saraswati and Ram Gopal. Ram Gopal is the first male dancer to perform this type on the modern stage.

Bharata Natyam is the classical dance of South India, as Odissi, Kathakali, Kathak or even Manipuri appertain to certain localities of India. South Indian dance has long been associated with temples, and seems to be not only an art but also a ritual.

The only form of 'Sangeeta' in which all its elements, viz., *Angika*, *Vachika*, *Sattwika* and *Aharya*, find full expression is the dance. Angika includes expression through gesture of limbs; Vachika is expression through voice; Sattwika is bodily expression of feeling (one versed in *Sattwika* will smile, shed tears and vividly portray the whole gamut of emotion); and Aharya is expression through ornament and costume, together with weapons, tools and other personal equipment of the person portrayed by the dancer. Bharata Natyam is danced to such *sangeet* and hence is an embodiment of all these elements.

Bharata Natyam has three aspects: *natya*, *nritya* and *nritta*. In Natya the dancer is supported by many actors and stage appointments as in a drama. In Nritya the dancer portrays a simple incident in the lives of the great heroes and heroines of ancient India, as narrated in the epics of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Brihatkatha* and *Puranas*, like *Srimad Bhagwat*. Though Raga and Tala are essential to Nritya, the dominant element is Bhava.

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Nritta is the cosmic aspect of Bharata Natyam. Its essence is pure rhythm. Nritta has two expressions—dance of Shiva or Tandava and the dance of Parvati or Lasya. In this pure form of dance, the Natya drama does not enter. It is rather a dance for the release of pure energy.

Bharata Natyam dancing which is practised by males is commonly termed as Kuchipudi dancing in the South, and the type done by females, that is, Bharata Natyam, is now performed by males as well, and is better executed by them. Because the type being very technical sometimes becomes very difficult for the women to be executed at its highest perfection. The time measurements in it are so very difficult that too much of hardship, practice and labour are required to master them, and at the same time agility and flexibility of the body are utterly needed. A male person at times can make a swifter movement than the females.

The Bharata Natyam dance as danced on the stage today is divided into five parts, viz., *Alarippu*, *Jatiswaram*, *Sabdam*, *Varnam* and *Tillana*. Alarippu is the first phase and means 'flowering' of the body. The body 'opens out' and flowers in a series of delicate and expressive poses. Every limb of the body is very slowly and rhythmically moved in accordance with slow music. Jatiswaram is the expression of the Nritta ideas and impressions created by music by means of dancing movements and proper gestures and postures. Varnam is the colouring, how sentiments and ideas can be expressed in different ways. It is akin to the same kind of colouring in Northern Indian 'Thumri' type of music. One particular word or a single line of a song is sung and given colour in different ways, giving a novelty and sweetness in every change. This change and beautification mark the talent of the artist. There is Nritya in Sabdam and Varnam.

Jatiswaram is of two kinds, Chilakottu, and Kaikalakottu. Chilakottu is more or less *adi* or a fractional part of the time beat, which though starting from the unit reaches the unit nonetheless within the same time, still the beating instead of even is somewhat fractional and not smooth. Kaikalakottu is double or four times of the regular beat.[10]

Up to this present day the songs to which dances are composed have been exclusively those rich in Sringara Ras (the love of emotion), rich because it is regarded as the main or Adi Rasa. Some are in honour of Kings and ministers of the time, patrons of both the art and the artistes. While many of these are beautiful, the hereditary dancers of India sometimes interpret them in a very earthly way, discarding and not understanding the high emblem and inner message of the divine love of Radha and Krishna or Shiva and Parvati. The Bharata Natyam exponents of the present age derive their inspiration from that music of the great composers of South India which rises in adoration to the gods. Thus Bhakti Rasa (sentiment of devotion) is the key-note of their dance. Rejecting the degraded feelings expressed in most of the songs associated in these days with the dance, they seek to reflect the emotions in their purity and to evoke in the audience a sense of uplift.

One of the special features of Nritya in Bharata Natyam is Sanchari

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Bhava, the interpretation in many ways of the meaning of a phrase in a song. For example, the opening phrase or *Pallavi*[11] is given five interpretations. They are given below and the first of them is the literal meaning of the phrase.

Why dost Thou slumber? O Lord of the city of *Sri Ranga*?
Why dost Thou slumber on the thousand-hooded serpent?
Thou who wearest the conch and the discus.
Why dost Thou slumber in Thy *Yogasayana* on a bed of *Durba* grass?
O beautiful one who takest of the ten *Avatars*.
Why dost Thou slumber—Thy bed a banyan leaf, O Lord, who as *Vamana* measured the universe in three paces.

It will thus be noticed that Sanchari Bhava elaborates in a beautiful way the meaning of a song, and gives dancers with understanding a great opportunity for spontaneous expression.

The songs to which *Bharata Natyam* recitals are performed were composed by great South Indian poets and composers of the 16th and 17th centuries. Among them, mention should be made of the following Kshetrajna, the famous composer of *Padas* (metrical lines), who lived in the 17 century. These lines are specially composed for the dance and are rich in *Nayika Bhavas*. Kshetrajna's Padas are all in praises of Sri Krishna. Ghanam Sinayya also lived in the 17th century and had the love affairs of Sri Krishna as his themes. Gopal Krishna Bharati, a great Tamil composer flourished during the 19th century and songs from his *Nandacharitam* are selected for Bharata Natyam items. Thyagaraja, the greatest composer in Carnatic music, who lived in the last quarter of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th, writes in praise of Sri Ramchandra, as most of Thyagaraja's songs are the devotee's appeal to the object of his devotion for compassion on him.

The songs are either composed in Tamil or Telugu or sometimes in Sanskrit. Generally for Krishna-Radha episodes the songs composed by Jayadeva are sung.

Bharata Natyam depicts mostly the hand gestures, both single and double, the eye, eye-brows, the head and the neck-gestures as enumerated in Natya Shastra. It is noteworthy that in Kathak dance, the Sundari neck-movement is only used, which is the to and fro movement of the neck horizontally. But in Bharata Natyam apart from Sundari, Tiraschina, which is the movement of the neck in an upward fashion on both sides, like the gliding of a snake, is used. Also both the 'Parivartita Prakampita' kinds of movements are practised. The former is the neck movement from right to left like a half moon, and the latter when the neck is moved forward and backward like the movement of she-pigeon's neck. The beauty lies with another type of neck movement which is applied at the time of fast beat of time and with the retracing of steps at the end of every sentiment and finale. This is the fast and slight movement of the neck sometimes, as if nodding.

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Bharata Natyam uses almost all the kinds of feet movements as mentioned in *Bharata Natya Sastra*. Placing both the feet in front, having bent the legs at the knees, is a very common feature. The "Alidha" and "Garuda" postures are also very common which are standing with one leg bent and the other leg and knee raised.

The Alidha posture which is placing the left foot before the right one and Garuda posture in which one knee is put on the ground, are very common in *Bharata Natyam*. The spiral movements (*bhramari*) as mentioned in *Natya Shastra* are mostly used in this type amongst which the the "Chakra" movement is very much practised, and mostly all the kinds of jumps (*utplavana*) are used. Almost all the gaits or *charis* enumerated in *Natya Shastra* are used, among which "Kuttana" of the striking of the earth with the heel or forepart of a foot or the entire sole, is mostly used. Similarly almost all the steps are used in *Bharata Natyam*, but more frequently we find the use of the goose-step and the peacock step.

It also practices the four kinds of *bhangas* or the bends of the body as mentioned in *Manasara*.

The main musical instruments used in Bharata Natyam are *Mridangam* and a pair of cymbals. The song is sung by a *vidwan* and the other members of the chorus repeat the lines of the song sung by their leader. The dance is performed in accordance with the time measurements supplied by Mridangam which is assisted by the cymbals, with respect to the broad measurements of time or '*Tala*'. The pair of cymbals give the main timings and the Mridangam produces the niceties and varieties, and the fractional measurements of the broad beats. The footwork of the dance is in accordance with the time measurements supplied by Mridangam. Sometimes the Tambura is also used to produce the main *swara* or the standing scale for the tune of the chorus.

The dress consists of a tight-fitting blouse as upper garment richly decorated with golden threads and usually of a shining silk or shining cotton and that piece of cloth or *dhoti* is sewn in the shape of the attire of "*dhoti*" as it is worn, with several creases, plates, and frilled on both legs. The cloth comes down to the ankles right up from the waist and at the middle there is a richly frilled piece of cloth which also hangs down from the waist to the knee or at times a bit below it. The piece of cloth is richly embroidered with gold. The male dancer does not put on the blouse, and his upper body is bare.

The dancers use highly artistically designed ornaments. The hands are covered with bangles both at the wrists and biceps, necklaces at the neck, *kundala* or earrings in the ear and one head ornament at the middle of the head. On the waist there is a *kardhani*, highly bedecked with rich stones. It is known as *katibandham*.

The Devadasis in South India dance Bharata Natyam in temples, but their art is not of such a high rank, nor polished and is a degenerated specimen of the original one.

Bharata Natyam's adherence to tradition helps the spectators to

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contact Indian culture as it is, rather than as it seems to an interpreter. This should not be understood to mean that there is lack of creative imagination. Bharata Natyam is an art with vast possibilities from unlimited individual expression. Bharata Natyam dancers who are in the foremost ranks, seek to portray only the transcendental emotions of the divine gods and goddesses, whom India has ever worshipped, such as Krishna and Radha, Shiva and Parvati, thus arousing the highest elements of pure devotion in the minds of those who witness the dance.

KATHAKALI

THE Kathakali is performed in almost every part of South India, but mostly in Kerala. A revival of this dance is being endeavoured even at present. This kind of dancing and dramatic performance is given by itinerant troupes of actors, who are usually Brahmins and Amalavasis, and are supported by the chiefs and leading families. It depicts events from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The meaning of Kathakali is *kudakali* or story-dance, the story being told by movements of the limbs.

The Kathakali dance is performed right through the night. The chorus begins the performance, the wordings of which are in Sanskrit slokas and sometimes a mixture of Sanskrit and Malayalam. Then the orchestra is played and last of all dancing with the rhythm of chorus and orchestra is performed. The stepping of Kathakali dance is known as '*Kalasam*'. The orchestra begins at the twilight time and it is a convention that Kathakali dancing will not be performed facing the South. The music is known as 'Kali'. From six o' clock in the evening till nine in the night, the music is played, then the stage is lighted with a big lamp, with a capacity to hold twenty seers (about forty kilos) of oil.

A troupe includes usually twelve actors, four singers and four drummers who form the orchestra. The orchestra is composed of (1) *Chenda*, a big cylindrical drum, which is hung from the neck of the drummer and gives a shrill sound, (2) *Muddalam* is another kind of small drum which is played by fingers of the hands with *angulimukhatra* (thimble) on, (3) songs (*Chengalam*), a pair of big cymbals (*Elathalam*), one big *kansar*, *been*, flute, etc. The mask which the dancers sometimes put on is known as *Mudi*.

After the first overture of music is played the rectangular or square curtain, "*trishila*", which is beautifully decorated, is removed. The dancers appear and dance to the accompaniment of chorus and orchestra. The chorus is sung to invoke the gods and goddesses and is named as "nandi". The invocation portion is known as "Totayam", which is followed by "Vandana Slogam" in praise of the gods.

Then the chief dancer enters the stage and begins the main theme. The beginning is known as "*purappada*" and it has two divisions: (1) *notam*

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kalasam, or rhythmic eye-movements and (2) *nila padam*, or the rythmic movements of the eyes, hands, feet and the body as a whole. After the entrance of the chief dancer the singers and the musicians of the chorus and orchestra are given full scope to show their skill and ability. This portion of the performance is known as "Melapadam".

The screen is removed and the dance proper begins. Shringara Rasa is depicted just at the beginning, because this is the first Rasa (Adi Rasa) and the dance finishes either with Adbhuta Rasa or Shanta Rasa. The motif of a Kathakali dance is generally the depiction of the triumph of holy over the unholy. The dance performance concludes with a song of prayer known as "Bharata Vakyam" by the dancer.

Once upon a time women played no part in pure Kathakali dance, their roles being played by boys but at present this practice is ignored. We get indications of boys dancing in the garb of women in Patanjali's *Mahabhasya*.

Mostly the dancers cover their faces with masks or use paints on their faces, the colours indicating the quality of the characters portrayed here or size and so on.

KUCHIPUDI—THE TEMPLE DANCE OF ANDHRA

KUCHIPUDI, the indigenous style of dance of Andhra Pradesh took its birth and effloresced in the village of the same name originally called Kuchelpuri or Kuchelapuram, a hamlet in Krishna district. From its origin, as far back in the dim recesses of time as the 3rd century B.C., it has remained a continuous and living dance tradition of this region.

One special feature about Indian classical dance is that the temple played a vital role in the creation of what we now recognise as the classical dances of India, Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, Kathak, Manipuri and Odissi. They all had their birth in the temple or its precincts, but apart from these well-known forms there are several other varieties of classical dance in India, which too had the temple as their cradle. The South Indian temple, in particular, has made a rich contribution to the dance wealth of the country, and as examples of this can be mentioned the Kudiyattam, Pathakam and Chakiar Koothu dances of Kerala, the Bhagavat Mela Nataka and Kuravanji dances of Tamil Nadu, and the Kuchipudi dance of Andhra.

The Kuchipudi dance is an outstanding contribution of the Andhra Region to the enrichment of Indian culture. The seeds of this style are to be found in an earlier virile and dynamic form of dance evolved around the then predominant cult of Shiva worship. With the ruling dynasty turning towards the worship of Vishnu in later days, themes based on the exploits of the Preserver-aspect of the trinity came to influence the

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composition of dramas and operas. Such operas later came to be known as 'Bhagwat Melas' and their performers as 'Bhagavathulus'.

According to tradition Kuchipudi dance was originally performed only by men, and they all belonged to the Brahmin community. These Brahmin families were known popularly as "Bhagavathulu of Kuchipudi".

Art and culture reached its zenith in Andhra during the rule of the Vijayanagar kings. The earliest reference in history to *Kachipudi Bhagavathulu* was made in 1502 A.D. in the *Machupath Kaifiat*. We are informed from the *Kaifiat* that the Brahmana Bhagavathulu went to Vijayanagar during the reign of Vira Narasinha Raya; that the king who had heard of their fame ordered a performance which he graced along with the queen and other members of the royal family, that the artistes enacted a play and exposed the sufferings of the people due to the misrule and maladministration of Sammeta Gurava Raju—of Siddhavatam—and that the king had to take immediate steps to improve the situation.

The itinerant group of Bhagavathulu must have been creating a variety of "Shiva Leela Natyama" during the Kakatiya period. With the advent of Vaishnavism they must have been enacting the popular stories of the *Bhagavata Purana* and this must have given them the name of Bhagavathulu.

Inscriptions of the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries show the existence of another group of artistes known as "Nattuva Melas" in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The quality of the art of these Nattuva Melas, in which women played important roles, was found to be deteriorating. It was, therefore, felt that the pristine purity and the quality of the art of dance should be preserved. As a result "Brahmana Melas", which excluded women, were organised; and the "Kuchipudi Bhagavata Mela" was one of them. The members of these melas received a broad cultural education in Sanskrit and Telugu literature. They were proficient in the *Natya Shastra*, *Abhinaya Darpana* of Nandikeshwara and *Alankara Shastra* and underwent a complete disciplined and rigorous training in Nritya, Nritha, Abhinaya and music.

This art which flourised under the benign patronage of kings, fell to evil days when the Vijayanagar empire began to decline. The petty rulers started to devote more time to waging minor skirmishes among themselves than to patronising the arts, and this great dance system was in danger of disintegration. With the fall of the Vijayanagar empire the 'Kuchipudi Bhagavata Mela' artistes migrated to Thanjavur (Tanjore) and were patronised by the Nayak Kings. Achyutappa Nayak, who ruled between 1561 and 1614 A.D., granted an *agraharam* to hundreds of Brahmin families to encourage and to develop the art of dance. The *agraharam* was known as Achyutapuram, the modern Melatur, near Tanjore. Dance-dramas or *yaksha ganas*, written in Telugu, were enacted by the Brahmana Melas in Melatur and the surrounding villages.

Kuchipudi dance reached its peak of development in the 14th century A.D. emerging as an enchanting style, sensuous in appeal, romantic in temperament and dramatic in content. Abounding in rhythmic patterns

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that are not only vibrant and scintillating in their choreography but also chiselled and sculpturesque in time and posture, this style plumbs the very depths of human emotion in its expressive sphere.

Even today a number of Telugu dramas written by the Telugu poet Venkataramanna Bhagavathulu of Melatur, a senior contemporary of Thyagaraja, are being enacted at Melatur during the "Bhagavata Mela" dance drama festival. The dance-dramas of Kuchipudi and Melatur have common characteristics—for instance the "Pravesa Daruvas" which introduce the characters on the stage, the "Rakti Ragas" sung; the improvised stage in the open street in front of a temple, the torch lights, the bagpipe, called the drone; the *mridangam* and the background music.

The next stage in the development of Kuchipudi art began with the introduction of "Muvya Gopal Padas—classical models of Lakshya"—to the art of Abhinaya. These *padas* deal with *Nayika* and the *Nayaka bhavas* comprehensively in all their manifold varieties and stand as masterpieces of erotic psychology. Kshetrayya, the great composer of these *padas*, hailed from Muvya, a village near Kuchipudi, and was a master musician and dancer. He was patronised by Vijayaraghava Nayak of Tanjore about 1630 A.D. *Kshetrayya padas* soon formed the mainstay of *Rasabhinaya*, or Satvikabhinaya, and elevated the art to a high degree of perfection. Kuchipudi artistes specialised in the Abhinaya of *Kshetrayya Padas*.

While several artistes take part in a dance-drama which gives scope for the exhibition of *shringara*, *karuna*, *hasya*, *vira* and other rasas only one gifted artiste renders *padabhinaya* in a single rasa—generally *Vipralambha Shringara* and develops *Bhavabhinaya* to its highest. This new experience created a new form of dance-drama known as "Bhama Kalapam" or "Parijatam", in which a single artiste figures prominently, and as a matter of fact is the Coryphee. The drama was written by the Great Sidhendra Yogi in the latter part of the 17th century. The story of Parijatam is well known, where Satyabhama, wife of Sri Krishna, with all her pride, compels her husband to get celestial Parijata tree and plant it in her garden.

It is said that the idea came as a revelation to the ascetic Sidhendra Yogi, who lived about 400 years ago, and that he taught the art to a group of Brahmin boys and with their help subsequently gave a performance before the ruler and noble men of Vijayanagaram. This performance, it is claimed, was well received, so well in fact, that it prompted a Muslim noble man to give away the village of Kuchipudi as a gift to the performing party. But there was one stipulation which governed this award; the village was to be used as a nursery, so to speak, to develop the newly created dance art. Sidhendra Yogi lived to honour this covenant and furthermore before he died he took a vow from all his disciples that they and their male issues would continue to stay at Kuchipudi and as a sacred obligation, endeavour to perpetuate the art created by him. He persuaded the Brahmin families of the village to promise that every male member of each family would practise the art and play the role of Satyabhama at least once in his life. He was responsible for the issue of the copper plate grant of the village of

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Kuchipudi as an *agraharam* (gift), and by Nawab Abdul Husain Qutub Shah of Golcunda (between 1672 and 1687 A.D.) to these families, who dedicated their lives to this great art. This injunction was honoured and handed over from generation to generation and the great heritage has been preserved to this day. The Kuchipudi school of dance reached the highest water-mark, with the addition of "Bhamakalapam" to its repertoire.

Between 1680 and 1690 A.D. Tirtha Narayana Yati composed and sang "Krishna Lila Tarangini". The *sabdas* or *sollukathu* (words) at the end of some of the songs indicate that the Yati was familiar with Natya and he intended them to be danced. Kuchipudi incorporated Tarangas (*Tarangam* is a style of Kuchipudi dance with the pot of water on head) into its art and this improved the quality of its Nritya. This is a dance which combines with rare felicity the spiritual genius of the temple nurtured dance. Kuchipudi artistes were adept also in the rendering of Ashtapadis of Bhakta Jayadeva.

"Golla Kalapam"—an interesting philosophic dialogue between a Brahmin and a milk-maid—was a novel addition to the Kuchipudi school of art during the later half of the 19th century.

What is now known in Tanjore. Bharata Natyam, with Alarippu, Jethiswaram Sabdam, is of later origin than Kuchipudi, within about 200 years, while Raga, Alapana, and singing of *padas* in Bharata Natyam were influenced by the katcheri music during the last about 150 years. The Kuchipudi style is reminiscent of the pre-Thyagaraja days, not only in singing, but in Nritya, Nritha, Sabda, Muktayi and Tirmanam. This *Bhagavata Kattu* or *Bani* is of great historical importance.

The technique of Kuchipudi seems to be fairly similar to that of the Bharata Natyam dance of Tamil Nadu. Actually the *Bharata Natyam* tradition of Tamil Nadu does not limit itself to the solo dances we see generally performed by women. Even in Tamil Nadu there survives to this day, albeit in an alternated form, another variety of Bharata Natyam which takes the shape of a dance-drama, which is performed by man alone, and which is known as the Bhagavata Mela Nataka. In fact, the Kuchipudi and *Bhagavata Mela Nataka* both stem from the mother art, Bharata Natya (Mohan Khokar's article) and both have much in common in the matter of themes, technique and presentation.

The Kuchipudi art started as a dance-drama. It still largely remains so, though through the years technique of this art has developed to give scope to indepenent dance numbers as well. These numbers may be in the form of concert numbers of pure and decorative dance, such as the Jethiswaram or the Thillana, but the majority of solo dances in the Kuchipudi technique pertain in Bhavabhinya or expressional exposition. The Padas of Kshetrayya, the Ashtapadis of Jayadeva and cantos from the *Krishna Leela Tarangini* of Swami Tirtha Narayana are some of the Bhavabhinaya items which have enjoyed sustained favour with Kuchipudi artistes and dances alike.

There is another important item of solo dance in the Kuchipudi

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technique. This is known as the 'Dasavatara' dance. This item can be considered to be virtually indispensable, for seldom can one see a Kuchipudi dance recital or dance-drama without this item being introduced into it somewhere. The purpose of the Dasavatara dance, it would seem, is to serve as an invocation to Lord Vishnu. In its rendering, this item endeavours to interpret through a sequence of mime and gesture the many attributes, real as well as symbolic, of the ten incarnations of Vishnu. Apart from the Dasavatara dance, the other important solo dance items in the Kuchipudi technique are the Pattabhishekam dance such as the Ramapattabhishekam and Prahlada Pattabhishekam. In these items, the principal events leading to the deification of the various heroes of Hindu theology are presented in the form of interpretative dance.

Besides Bhama Kalapam, the script of which was originally written by Sidhendra Yogi, and the text very much altered later, and various manuscripts of it are available now, the other items of Kuchipudi are Golla Kalapam, composed about 100 years ago by Bhagavathalu Ramayya; a prominent Sanskrit scholar: the text is available in manuscript (there was an old version called *Oora Golla Vesham* in which the humourous character Sankara Kandayi appears), and *Prahlada Charitam* by Tirunarayanacharyulu (who lived about 150 years ago); *Shashirekha Parinayam* by Vallabhanem Choudari of Golivepalli, Godiveda Taluq, written about 65 years back; *Mohini Rukmangada* by Beta Bhagavanta Rao of Nuzvid, Usha Parinayam by Chidambara Kavi of Palnadu, *Harishchandra Natakam*, *Gayopakhyanam* by Vallabhanemi Ramakrishnayya of Golivepalli, *Rama Natakam*, *Rama Charitram*, *Rukmini Kalyanam*

The other compositions used for Kuchipudi include *Balinta Vesham*, the story of the first confinement of a young woman, *Dadinamma*, the story of Chola princess and Kuravanji, which is an old form of dance-drama, depicting the two characters, Singi and Singadu, wife and husband respectively. Among the other items mention should be made of *Rukmangada*, *Markandeya*, *Dhruva Charitram*, *Kamsa Vadha*, *Bhasmasura Vadha* and *Shivarathri*.

It is interesting to note that nearly 250 years back a family of Kuchipudi dancers was induced to migrate and settle in the village Kappatralla near Alampur by the then Nawab of Banganapalli, who granted them some pieces of land as gift. It is found that their successors are performing "Bhama Kalapam" in Hyderabad.

The genesis of Kuchipudi art, as of most forms of classical Indian dances, is associated with religions. For a long time the art was presented only at temples and that too only as a part of the annual festival of certain temples in Andhra. The Ramalingeshwara temple at Kuchipudi was the most important in this regard. This might have been due to the fact that Sidhendra Yogi, the founder of the Kuchipudi tradition, used to offer regular worship at this temple. Kuchipudi performance generally used to take place at night and in the open air on improvised stages. However as an exception, the Ramalingeshwara temple at Kuchipudi was provided with

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a permanent open air stage for the performances.

Two great participants who kept up the traditional excellence of Kuchipudi were China Venkataramayya and Vempati Chinta Krishnamurty. They maintained the dance-drama tradition. Vedanta Lakshminarayana Sastry was an expert and versatile artiste of the Kuchipudi school.

YAKSHAGANA OF KARNATAKA

IN Yakshagana dance-drama, although the word 'Yakshagana' may mean a "Style of Music", what is understood by the word is a form of musical dance-drama. Yakshagana is played in the open air and so it is called "Bayalata" (open air drama). Though music plays a prominent part in Yakshagana, still the role of dance in it is of no mean merit.

Its traditional form is a very rich one and it has ten centuries of existence and evolution in an area which is called the districts of South and North Kanaras, and the hinterland of these districts. All this area is a part of Karnataka. But now decadence has set in owing to the imitation of other musical styles and discarding one's own traditional costumes in favour of the modern cinema or drama forms.

The songs of Yakshagana are written literature, set to a separate style of music. The musical style is virile and operative in nature. The themes are mostly from the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavata* and the *Puranas*. The emotional content is developed through a rhythmic style of dance of its own. Added to these comes extempore prose dialogues, to enlighten the masses about the story. Since the stories of the epics centre round gods and demons, its costumes are designed to create a world of fantasy as apart from realism. Variations of this type of dance-drama are prevalent all over the South, but it is the individual characteristic feature of each that can contribute the essential elements towards art renaissance.

We find the earliest reference to the Yakshagana in Kannada works of 1105 A.D. and 1185 A D. though in a disperaging way. During the 14th century we find the major composers of Yakshagana, among whom mention should be made of Devidasa of Udipi (1640 A.D.), Nagappayya of Dwajapur (modern Koteshwar), of the same period and Subha of Ajapura (modern Brahmavara), who lived in about 1680 and was a court poet too. The eighteenth century also produced certain renowned dramatists and composers.

The *maddale* or drama work is such as to lend itself to exquisite footwork. It is fairly elaborate and to be a good dancer of Yakshagana needs years of practice. The 'Nritha' is accompanied by another drum called 'Chanda' during depiction of valour or battle. There are graceful body flexions and swayings that go to blend with footwork. On the whole rhythm is its essence. The element of heroism is very well developed in these plays.

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Female roles alone portray Lasya movements, and 'Houma' or clown its lighter modes. From what one can see of the ritual dance, called *Vaidya* dance (doing Naga worship), that inspired Yakshagana dance, it is capable of all-round use, and can be one of the most graceful and meaningful of Indian rhythmic dances, as separate from dances that attempt to do the function of language. As such its appeal is universal.

The male costume can be grouped into two major divisions, the romantic roles like Karna or Arjun or Gandharva; and the demoniacal roles like that of Ravana. Romantic roles are colourful and pleasing, and this element is worked out in red, orange, black and gold. The face make-up was plain pink or yellow in olden days, when oil lamps were used to light the stage. The black of the eyes and moustache are stressed in. There are set ornaments on the body, clad in either a green bodice or its complementary colour. Kings wear a well-designed golden crown. Other roles wear a *mundas* or turban. It is like a lotus leaf in shape, clothed in red or black, with radiating lines of golden ribbon. The size and colour of this turban is dependent on the glamorous nature of the person. If he is a Gandharva or a Kiratha, it is larger still, and may be slanting, front ways or sideways.

The *Dhoti* worn is a type of chequered cloth in orange red and black that well supports the upper gold and reds. There are trappings round one's waist, and a sail-like cloth of plain red and white at the back. The *Dhoti* is tucked up in such a manner that the dancer's lower body is covered by a pattern of the romperous shape of the cloth which is complemented by responsive movements of the hands. The costumes and movements are mutually supporting.

In demoniacal roles the facial make-up is very intricate. It has some resemblance to the Kathakali technique, but is painted by the artiste himself unaided. It is mask-like in appearance, but plastic in use. It creates a rich element of fantasy. The demoniacal roles wear *Weistis* below the waist, the same type of chequered cloth that is worn for the romantic roles but having larger squares.

It is only when we come to female roles that the earlier traditions are so completely forgotten and we find on the stage an up-to-date modern girl walking or dancing along with a Gandharva and Ravana from myths of time of yore.

ODISSI : DANCE OF ORISSA

THE date of birth of dance in Orissa can be traced and must be the same as that of the birth of dance in any part of our country. The earliest account of dancing in this State we get from the *Mahabharata*. The great epic describes that the *Pandavas* having been defeated at the dice play by Duryodhana were exiled and went to the kingdom of Matsya

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Desha, where king Virata ruled. There Arjun in the disguise of a lady named Vrihannala used to teach dancing to Uttara, the princess. Now history speaks of Indian culture, even culture from Gujarat, having spread to the Far East, and the art and culture of Northern and Western India had to go to Orissa first in order to be transported to the Far East. So it was possible that the dance art propagated at Matsya Desha travelled towards Orissa, and to the south.

We have other valuable traces in the *Mahabharata* which lead us to the conclusion that dance was practised in the state of Orissa since long and the dance art went to the South as well as to the Far East Island of Java and Bali from this part of the country.

The Aryan civilisation undoubtedly went from Northern India to the South and history tells us that Indian civilisation went as far as the Far Eastern islands of Java, Bali, Sumatra and Borneo. Aryan civilisation, according to history, went from Gujarat, Magadha and Bengal to Kalinga (Orissa), and from there to the Far East, because Odra and Kalinga had innumerable ports during those days. A modern artificial harbour like Madras was not in operation then. Orissa had ports like Puri, Manikapattam, Kanchipuram, Konark, etc. Today the big ships cannot sail on the shallow waters of these ports, and the sea does not wash the soil of some of them (like Konark), so they have lost their use and importance. In olden days the ports of Puri and the aforementioned ones were quite suited for small boats. South India had neither any port worth the name to convey art and culture to the Far East, nor any culture of its own when Orissa was a flourishing country in the field of art. Then again, civilisation went to the Far South much later, and evidently (and naturally) Orissa made a great cortribution towards South Indian art. Civilisation and culture to an enormous extent were transported from Orissa to South India. When Orissa was busy transporting culture to South India it was also exporting it to the Far East as well, and Orissan culture then was a fusion of Dravidian and Aryan culture.

There is also mention of the spread of Orissan art and culture in the *Ramayana*. That Sugriva sent out search parties in quest of Sita to the four cardinal points, is well known. A group of persons was sent to "Suvarnadvipa" (Sumatra) and "Yavadvipa" (Java), and they sailed naturally from Orissan ports. Obviously Orissa was a land of art and culture where the artistes, cultured and educated people used to assemble before sailing abroad. Evidently the land got an opportunity to be benefited by not only its own artistic culture but also the culture of the interior of India.

Orissan people had maritime contacts with the inhabitants of Java and Ceylon and they took with them their rich art traditions. We find in the documents of the famous Chinese scholar-tourist Huen T'Sang that an Orissan prince named Vijaya Singha went to Ceylon from Orissa. His kingdom spread over the South East island of Ceylon, and for his dominance he was known as Vijaya and Vijaya Singha, because he, according to a legend, was the son of a lion (*Singha*). And from his name "Simhala"

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(Ceylon) the conquered island got her name later on. It is obvious that he took Orissan culture to Ceylon as well.

It may be that Simhala is not derived from Vijaya Singha, but because in those days the land was full of lions it was called simhala or the abode of lions. And further, any Kshatriya had the surname of *Singh* which can be found even in the present days. And Ceylon was not visited by Huen T' Sang for reasons given by his translator Samuel Beal.

To the author it seems that Vijaya Singha went to Malay-Peninsula, Java and Sumatra. From his name we have Singapur or Singapore river, and also Singapur or Singapore port, and bearing his name we have the tract of land known as Shrivijaya at Sumatra, where the Shailendra dynasty flourished.

His influence prevailed over the island of Bali, known as "Bali Anka", or the lap of strong men (*Bali*). Evidently Vijaya was the general of a strong army and his strong men settled down at Bali, and from them the name of Bali has originated.

As a result of colonisation of Java by the people of Kalinga, a part of Java came to be known as Kalinga in the seventh century A.D. Instances are numerous with regard to Orissan influence of art and culture on Java, Sumatra and Ceylon. The influence of Orissan Tantric elements and *Shaiva* doctrines and later on *Brahmanism* and *Mahayana Buddhism* cannot be ignored.

The Javanese Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of Borobudur, the epic in stone, have striking similarities with the Buddha images of Lalitagiri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri. It is difficult to discard the assumption that the Javanese Buddhas were shaped by the Buddhist sculptors, who migrated to Java from Orissa after the decline of Buddhism in India. There is also close resemblance in the statues of Tara, Manjusri, Avalokiteshwar and other images of the two lands. The names of rivers, towns and kings of Orissa have peculiar resemblance to those of the South Eastern islands and this similarity further confirms the conviction that Orissa spread a dominating influence over those islands in the field of art and culture.

Another curious feature is that Orissa was a part of Magadha kingdom for a long time and had been under the influence of Nalanda. The language of the aristocracy and the learned people was Sanskrit first and gradually, after many years, this language was changed into Oriya, a mixture of Northern India and Bengali script, which resembles to a great extent the "Kavi" script, which is the language of old Java.

Further there is close resemblance in the enactments from the *Ramayana* in Orissa, Ramlila and "Wayang" enactments of *Ramlila* at Java and Bali. About 150 'lacona' are based on the *Mahabharata*. Eight of them describe the ancestors of the Pandavas, one of whom is known as "Bambang Kalinga", i.e., probably Bombang of Kalinga. There is also similarity in the shadow and puppet plays of the two lands and also the masks in Orissan Ramlila and those used in 'Chow' dance resemble the masks of Wayang. The Orissan dance art so much influenced these

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islands that even the scriptures of those countries speak of it, and instances there are in plenty.

Now, coming to the question of Orissa's influence regarding art and culture on South India, history tells us that from time to time there had been matrimonial relations between the royal families of Orissa and South India. Shaivism, Buddhism and other religious and cultural thoughts migrated from the North to Orissa and from Orissa to South India and took different shapes there. At one time there was a great seat of learning at Pushpagiri University where now Lalitagiri and Udayagiri exist, and from there learning and culture spread to the South.

History also speaks of royal matrimonial relations between Rajaraja, the son of King Vajrahasta of the Ganga dynasty, with Rupasundari, daughter of Rajendra, a very powerful Chola king. Their son was Anantvarman Chola Ganga, probably called so because he descended from Gangas and Cholas. He built the present great temple of Jagannath. These marriages bear out the fact that Orissan art and culture migrated to South India.

History again tells us that the great emperor Asoka annexed Orissa into his territory, and he fought against the artistic, peace-loving inhabitants of Kalinga, whose nature was to welcome anybody who wanted to share their peaceful life—a life of contentment. During the fight there was great bloodshed which immensely moved the hard-hearted emperor. That battle changed him and he became a staunch follower of Buddhism. The people of Orissa in these days were great artistes; they did not take up arms but preached *ahimsa*, the only doctrine of art, which was able to bring a mighty emperor like Asoka under its influence. After Asoka came in contact with the people of Kalinga he became a great admirer of the inhabitants of that country for their indomitable courage and for the quality of turning foes into friends through the artistic cult of *ahimsa*. Thereafter Asoka himself became a great patron of art, being influenced by the artistes of Orissa. He sent artistes to different places, even outside India, who constructed pillars and inscribed the teachings of the Buddha on them.

Until now we were dealing with the spread of Orissan art and culture, the spread of dancing in ancient times to the South East and to the South and also the references to the dance art of Orissa in Hindu scriptures and mythology. But so far owing to historical inadequacy there is no clear proof and link between different stages in the development of dance art in that state.

Regarding documentary proof, Bharat Muni's great encyclopaedia of Indian dance and music *Natya Shastra*, mentions classical and folk dance and music in Orissa, which shows that this state did not lag behind in dance culture and was one of the pioneer places for art. That means that Odissi dance existed as far back as 100 B.C., or according to some, second century after Christ. *Sangita Ratnakara* also mentions Orissan music.

The earliest historical record we get is that from the Hathigumpha inscription in Udayagiri of the great emperor Mahameghabahana Kharavel

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(*khara* great and *vela* power). He was a great patron of art. It is mentioned in the fifth line of the inscription that in his third regnal year, the king, who was an expert in *Gandharva Vidya* (art of music and dance), arranged a performance of "Darpa Nrutya" (*ugra tandava nritya*), Boditra (*lasya nritya*) and music for the enjoyment of his subjects. Rani Nur Gumpha in this connection corroborates by the presence of a figure of a king seated in dancing hall with a female dancer and others accompanying her on musical instruments.

History records of a great king named Suvakardeva of Kar or Bhauma dynasty (seventh century), in whose reign culture and civilisation of Orissa spread far and wide throughout the length and breadth of India and even up to China. From the ninth up to the twelfth century Orissa enjoyed patronage in art and culture from the Kesri kings. Jayati Kesri, the celebrated king of this dynasty, built the Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneshwar. During his reign Shankaracharya visited the temple at Puri. The temples of Gupteshwar, Brahmeshwar and Parashurameshwar, the oldest of the temples existing at present in Orissa, were built during his reign. The outer walls of these temples at Bhubaneshwar are replete with artistic dancing figures of girls in innumerable poses, which are a great storehouse for dance artistes, and which speak of the State's advancement in this particular art. In these temples we find figures in great numbers of Nataraja Shiva in 'Lalita Tandava' style, and also males and females taking part in dancing and musical performances, in solos, duets and groups.

A Brahmeshwar temple inscription of Bhuvaneshwar speaks of the employment of Devadasis in the service of gods, and Queen Kalavati, mother of King Udyata Kesri, built the temple of Lord Shiva in the middle of the eighth century and employed Devadasis for his service.

The twelfth century saw the origin of a new cultural pattern around the temple of Jagannath, and Lord Jagannath was the source of inspiration for the flowering of literary and cultural activities. *Madala Panji* the chronicle of Lord Jagannath, which began to be written towards the end of the sixteenth century A.D. mentions that Devadasis were employed in the service of Lord Jagannath by King Anantavarman Chola Ganga.

During the tenth or eleventh century, which is the date ascribed to *Skanda Purana*, dance formed a necessary ritual (according to the Purana) for the worship of Jagannath. During this period Jayadeva wrote *Gita Govinda*, and its *astapadis* became so popular, and attracted the artistic mind of the people that the lines used to be sung daily as a regular item for the worship of the God. According to an Oriya legend Jayadeva's wife, Padmavati, before her marriage, expressed her desire to dedicate herself as a Devadasi to Lord Jagannath. The Devadasis that time were regarded in high esteem in the society and later went by the names of Surbesyas, Maharis and Wachunis.

In front of almost all the temples *Naata Mandap*, or a big dais, is erected on which the Devadasis used to dance. The Sovaneshwara temple at Bhubaneshwar has presented an inscription which gives an instance of

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the employment of beautiful girls as attendants of gods.

Orissa and Konark are inseparable. The art of Orissa is embedded in the temple of Konark, which speaks of the highest pitch to which that State reached in this particular field in the thirteenth century A.D during the reign of Narasinghadeva. The temple abounds in lovely figures of Odissi dance which correspond to the Karanas and Angaharas enumerated by Bharata in his *Natya Shastra*. The temple demonstrates not only dance poses but a number of musical instruments which were in use during that period.

After the twelfth century there was a decline of Shaivism in Orissa with the result that Nataraja figures in temples gave place to Krishna figures or Natwar images. With the advent of Vaishnavism in the State, *Devadasis* were not only employed in the Jagannath temple but also in other temples of Orissa. Apart from the *Devadasis*, *Gaudisands* or temple maids were also engaged, whose primary duty was to fan the God by means of 'Chamara.'

An inscription from Simhachalam temple reveals that Narasinghadeva built a dancing hall and arranged to give gifts from the State treasury to the singers and the Devadasis. An inscription from the Ananta Vasudeva temple at Bhubaneshwar narrates that *Chandrawati*, daughter of *Narasinghadeva*, was a great exponent of Odissi dance, was an inventor of dance poses and used to give instructions to the sculptors engaged in decorating the walls of the temples, to execute particular dance poses. Almost all the dancing figures on the walls of the temples of Orissa are, to speak plainly, the photographic representation of Chandrawati's dance performances. She was an accomplished singer too.

The last inscription of Jagannath temple in the reign of the powerful Suryavansi monarch—Gajapati Gandeshwara Navakoti Karnat Kalavargeshwara Kapilendradeva, reveals that he followed the rituals prescribed by his ancestors for the worship of Jagannath, and a series of dances had to be performed in some specified order at the time of *bhoga* (lunch for the deity), and from the time of worship (*arati*) or *dhupa* (incence burning) upto the Lord's bed time (*barasingar*). It was also the order of the king that Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* must be sung by four Vaishnava devotee singers during these hours.

Kapilendradeva is said to be the celebrated author of the play "Parasuram Vijaya", which was staged before Lord Jagannath amongst a distinguished gathering. The middle of the 15th century records another king named Purushottamdeva, a great devotee of Jagannath, whose queen Padmavati was honoured with the great distinction of "Gopa Sadhi" for her services rendered as a Devadasi. The above account can be found in the history of Orissa known as *Madal Panji* or *Mangal Panji*. By the end of the same century during the reign of Pratap Rudradeva "Tarau" enumerated the 36 duties, "Chhatrisha Niyog" in temples as well as the duties to be performed in the king's palace (Deyul Karan and Raj Karan). Among the 26 duties prescribed for observance in temples there is one duty which is a "Niyog" of the Devadasis.

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It should be mentioned here that *mahari*, the name of the Devadasis, came into vogue probably from the beginning of the 18th century. Before this they were commonly known as "Dwarikas" and "Devadasis". It is said that the name Mahari was introduced by Chaitanya Deva as the word Devadasi was not much liked by the people in general. Another striking feature is evinced in the fact that in South India the Devadasis left the art of dancing and took to prostitution as their livelihood, and in order to stop this corruption in the name of religion and art the government stopped the Devadasi institution by promulgating a provincial legislation. But Maharis of Orissa did not degenerate themselves to that extent and are even now existing under the royal patronage of the Maharaja of Puri.

Rai Ramananda, Governor of Rajmahendri Mandal of Pratap Rudradeva, was a great patron of art and literature. Ramananda, Jagannath Das and Totaram Babaji were the originators of "Sakhi Bhava" cult. They espoused the necessity of wearing female dress to imitate Sakhi Bhava while worshipping God. Ramananda is known as an incarnation of "Bishakha". He is the author of *Jaganmath Ballabh*, a play in Sanskrit, replete with dances and songs. The Devadasis were given instructions to dance for the play, which was staged before King Pratap Rudradeva. The play was directed by Ramananda himself.

During the reign of Pratap Radradeva, Orissa was champion of art and literature. Ramananda was a great musician himself and was the Guru of Krishna Das Goswami. Krishna Das was the Guru of the celebrated Hari Das, who, in his turn, was the Guru of Tansen. This fact establishes the rule that Orissi music has contributed to a great extent to the North Indian music. During the reign of Pratap Rudradeva Lakshminarayana, a scholar-musician of Orissa, was appointed music teacher in the harem of Krishna Deva Raya of Vijayanagar. Akbar sent hisOriya court musician, Bhatta Mahapatra, to the Court of Mukundadeva, the last independent king of Orissa, as an envoy of the Moghul Emperor.

From the latter part of the 16th century, with the losing of independence the royal patronage towards art in Orissa gradually diminished The Muslims and the Marathas began to loot and plunder and naturally the Devadasi institution in the temples lost its foothold. There was a great slack in the observance of the once so rich and artistically prescribed duties for the worship of lord Jagannath. Gutipuas (*Guti*-one, *Pua*-boy) or Akhadipilas (boys in girls' dress) were employed in the service of Jagannath. The Moghuls appointed Ramachandradeva, the Raja of Khurda in Puri district, as the superintendent of Jagannath temple and he introduced the Gutipuas for the service of the Lord. They used to get the normal gifts sanctioned by royal patronage and were asked to dance before the deity on certain festivals

Before Ramachandradeva's time the Devadasis were employed to dance only in the temples before their respective presiding deities. And they were never compelled to dance in the royal courts. But from the time of Ramchandradeva, probably due to Muslim influence, Devadasis were

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deputed to dance before the kings and nobles to satisfy their lust. There sprang up a class of Devadasis who came to be known as "Khurdanijog" and who were employed to dance in the court of the king of Khurda. From this time the Devadasis slipped from their high pedestal, fell down to become common courtesans.

But side by side with the Gutipuas the Devadasis in the name of "Maharis" developed, and in spite of being oppressed by the Muslims, Marathas and later on by the British they maintained their art; struggling hard through heavy odds. They preserved the art within themselves up to this time and even now the institution survives with all its tradition and brilliance to give inspiration to the modern dance artistes and scholars of art.

Credit should be given to the Gutipuas for preserving the old art. They were patronised by the 'Matha', 'Akhada Ghars' and the zamindars. After the Gutipuas *Batu-Nritya* was introduced, and with the introduction of Batu-Nritya "Shoroshapachar Puja" or 16 varieties of playing (*Vadya*) the drum also came into vogue. Batu-Nritya was obviously Tandava in character, which has connection with *Batuka Bhairava*. In the Gutipua and Batu-Nritya dances more of 'Natwar' poses are being found than Nataraj Karanas.

Later on, the Gutipuas copied some poses and dance numbers from the courtesans of the Southern Telugu countries in the 18th century and the dance art became known as "Sakhipila". It was a cheap erotic type of dance. Gradually Akhadipila and the Sakhipila were mixed up and there was a great hotch-potch.

Odissi dance is a classical art of beauty. Its greatness consists in that it is the result of the mixture of two cultures, one, the culture of the land itself and the other, the North Indian culture. The fusion of these two cultures has given birth to this ancient culture.

Orissa undoubtedly is the land of supreme cultural art. A state which could give expression to such a sublime art in her sculpture embedded in Konark and other innumerable temples scattered all over the province, could not be inert or blunt in other spheres of artistic expressions. All arts supplement the needs of one another, and together with her beautiful sculpture, Orissa must have had her music, dance and literature raised to a supreme height.

MANIPURI

MANIPUR is another home of artistic dance of India. Dancing among the Manipuris is considered an amusement though the inspiration is often purely religious. As a folk-art it is vitally alive. The secret of the charm of the dancers lies in their freshness and spontaneity. The inspiration as said before, of Manipuri dancing is purely religious, but most of the 'group' and 'communal' dances are the natural expressions of the emotions

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of the Manipuris. Every festival in Manipur, whether it is religious or social, provides an occasion for dancing. A bright moonlit night at any time of the year draws the young people out to dance their way from village to village, their numbers increasing as they move along.

The source of inspiration of the dance items is the love story of Radha and Krishna. Each dance depicts an episode, the Ras Lila being the most important and deservedly the most famous.

Every village in Manipur has a temple either of Krishna-Radhika, or Krishna-Balarama, Shri Chaitanya, and attached to the temple is a *nautch ghar* (dancing-hall).

Manipuris have four kinds of dances, one performed by boys, the others by boys and unmarried girls. Generally Manipuri dances are swift, since they endeavour to have a footwork analogous to that of the sound of *khol* (a kind of drum played for this particular dance and *kirtan* of songs, etc.). The jumps and sittings are at times abrupt, the charactertistic features of Manipuri dancing. There is simplicity in it. The music is supplied by a kind of instrument, very much like the guitar, and the khol. Sometimes the dances are accompanied by chorus, the members of which do not dance. The dancers also sometimes sing while dancing.

The most picturesque dance is a scene of events from the story of Krishna and Radha. The dances are entirely free from sensuous gesticulations and implications.

The costume of Krishna and Radha and members of the orchestra and chorus, of both males and females, is gorgeous in the extreme. The headgear of the female is a small conical skull cap of black clothor velvet with a narrow band of pearl trimmings at the edge. An ornamental branching spray of white imitation pearls hangs down from the top. The close-fitting jacket is of velvet with gold trimmings about two inches broad on the half-sleeves. A piece of white cloth is wound tightly round the waist from under the breasts to just above the hips to give support. The petticoat, worn like a flounce, is made of silk, either green or dark red, and at the bottom is a wide band of sequin ornamentation.

On the body of the skirt are sewn round, oval or square pieces of gold and silver tinsels. Over the skirt there is a top skirt of the thinnest muslin, on which are sewn rows of silver tinsel. The effect is gorgeous, reflecting light in all directions.

Krishna puts on a yellow silk Dhoti (Sari) in the fashion of men. There is a silk scarf tied round the waist. The headgear is a crown on which a tuft of peacok feathers is attached. There are, further, innumerable necklaces and bangles both on the biceps and wrists. The body is bare of clothes but is covered with ornaments.

The *Ras* dances go on without a break for twelve hours to the accompaniment of songs from the *Padavalis* of Jayadeva or other celebrated Vaishnavite poets. All important religious dances are based on episodes in Shri Krishna's life, such as the "Dol Jatra" held in spring, celebrated with much sprinkling of *abir*, *jhulan* during the rainy season and the *Rath Jatra*.

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A dance next in popularity to the Ras Lila is the Lai Haraoba, which literally means—making merry with the gods. It is held in front of the temple of Thang-Jina, the tribal god of Moirang. Though a religious dance, there is more fun and frolic in it than restraint.

It starts with offerings of fruits and flowers by gaily dressed girls, led by the Maibis, the priestesses of the older religion. Preliminaries over, the whole assembly joins in young men choosing their own partners. The best dancers take the lead and dance the story of "Khamba and Thoibi", the tale of the love of a brave but poor lad for a princess. The dance is the Manipur version of the *Hara Parvati* dance and is executed with great vigour and gusto. Previous to the conversion of the Manipuris to Hinduism, they were animists, and, as in Burma, the old religion still survives side by side with the new, every house having its "Imung Lai", god or goddess of the countryside and jungle, which has been incorporated in the Hindu pantheon, and is worshipped either under its own name or under a borrowed Hindu one. Relics of the old ritual survive in the "Lai Haraoba", or pleasing of the god, an annual ceremony in which each village propitiates its own particular "Lai". The valley and hills abound in *laiphams*, or God's seats, which are the abiding places of Lam and Umang Lais, and are reverenced accordingly.

The Tandava Manipuri dances are often very wild and heroic. The Marrings of Naga tribe have a pretty dance in which women take part. The Kabuis, another type of Nagas, have a series of dances executed by the unmarried men and girls, which are artistic in form, with the music going with a swing more in accordance with European ideas of melody than most Indian music.

The ritual of the hill tribes consists solely of propitiation of the spirits of the stream and jungle, all of whom are malevolent in varying degrees. Both they and the Manipuris are extremely superstitious.

Manipuri boys sometimes dance with Khol and Khanjani (small cymbals). There is another male dance—Krishna killing the crane (Baka-sura). The crane is made of a white cloth on a wooden frame of the shape of a very big crane, the eyes are made of rags and there are two long sharp wooden teeth. A man underneath the frame with jingling anklets signifies the legs of the crane.

KATHAK—THE CLASSICAL DANCE OF NORTH INDIA

THE first thing that has to be borne in mind is that Kathak, like so many other branches of our art and culture, originated as a new form of dance from the Indo-Moghul cultural fusion, an origin which left its birth marks to the disadvantage of the style. Histrionic art always suffers from

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one handicap in that its exponents, especially the females when they are successful, become social low downs. It is particularly so in the case of dance, because dancers have to create beauty somatically—a quality that is a limitation in the present stage of our mental and moral susceptibilities.

This aspect of the dancer's life was much worse in the case of Kathak, which having emerged directly under the fostering care of the Moghul rulers and their oligarchy, had to flourish under the patronage of the Moghul courts. But the laxity and the levity of the Moghul courts were notorious. The dance was thus put under the additional handicap of being repugnant to Hindu chauvinism.

The school, therefore, largely failed to attract any, except those of easy virtue. Naturally, devoid of social encouragement, frowned upon by Hindu nationalism and rivalled by the old schools, Kathak could not possibly spread deep roots in our socio-cultural life. And then as the glory of Moghul rule declined giving rise to a new form of national awakening (an awakening caused by an intrusion of modern industry into our social life) there came that antipathy in the modern Indian mind which, out of snobbery so common to any immature culture, reviled all that was Indian and ancient. In that upsurge, Kathak even slipped into the vapid precincts of houses of ill-fame and degenerated steadily till it caused the emergence of a new form of dance, the "Nautch Dance" or the "Bazar Dance".

Any form of art, if it is the product of deep social causes, proves indestructible. No matter how sweeping the apathy, how sanguine the prejudice, whatever the influence that may counter its progress, a form of art, once evolved under pressure of social upheaval, never dies. It is because of this amazing stamina and strength that a form of art, though developed centuries ago, and subsequently, owing to cataclysmic causes, buried in the deeps of antiquity, suddenly (may be an epoch or two after its collapse), again springs up with no less vitality, with no less potentialities than what it had even at the very zenith of its popularity. And during this period of oblivion, forgotten by all, the form remains alive and is often rejuvenated under the care of gifted and loyal devotees.

This is how Kathak as a classical school of dance survived, distinct from "Nautch Dance". The glory of the preservation of this treasure of our cultural heritage is due, mainly, to the families of Kalka, Bindadin of Lucknow, and their talented descendants, Achhan Maharaj, Luchchu Maharaj and Shambhu Maharaj, and a number of others whom society, in grateful recognition of what they have done, will have to unearth from their historical obscurity. There is another personality, who, in spite of many limitations has done an invaluable service to Kathak. She is the much lamented dancer, the late Menaka.

Kathak is the only style which can form a necessary part of the classica musical system of India which is demonstrated today by the acknowledged family musicians (Gharana). The Kathak dancer symbolises the highest perfection of "Tala-music" and rises above the limitations of the Raga or the "Swara-Music". There is only the nominal background of Swara (tune)

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in the form of the Lahara which the solitary Sarangi player goes on playing. Only the *sthai* or the first strain of the *gat* (musical composition) is played. The dancer begins in some of the standard Talas (time measurements), like the Trital, Jhaptal, Ektal, etc., and all the intricacies of that Tala in the shape of numerous 'Toras', 'Tihas', 'Parans', 'Bols', 'Gats', and so many kinds of 'Layas' (tempo and rhythm) as 'Sawai', 'Derhi', 'Pouni', 'Dun', 'Chaugun' and 'Athgun', etc., are demonstrated. It is purely a "Tala" affair, and as such it is pure Nrita in the highest developed form.

In order to make the whole programme attractive there is a subtle mixture of Bhava-Nritya (pantomime) in the shape of some of the episodes or 'Gats', in which some episode of the life of Krishna or Shiva is enacted. The "Kathak" dance has its own Tandava (virile) or the male, and the 'Lasya' (amorous) or the female style. The Jaipur Gharana is a specialist in the Tandava variety. Other famous artistes of this school are Mohan Lal, Jagannath, Gouri Shankar, Sunder Lal, Sohan Lal, Kartik Ram, and Radhe Lal.

A serious fault with the Kathak dancers is that they indulge themselves exclusively in the dead weight of technique and we always find foot gymnastics. It is astounding though obvious that the more the technique the less the gracefulness and sublimity.

There is in every art a struggle between technique and artistry, the means and the end, the story to be told and the grammar and the words used in its telling. Technique can always be acquired, grace and ease of movement but rarely. The difference between dancing and acrobatics lies not so much in technique as in a state of mind.

The acrobat performs his steps in such a fashion as to underline the difficulty of the task. In his case the drama is implicit in the physical performance. He is putting a question to the audience, "Will I get through without a tumble or not?" He is telling them, "Look, I am creating a record number of turns. Will I reach fifty?" That is the only idea behind his performance. His climax consists of a dazzling finish to whip up applause. There is relief in this climax that he has succeeded in overcoming his difficulties. It is like the singer of patriotic or Mother ballads who at the conclusion lifts his hat and waits. In the first case the audience murmurs: "How beautiful;" in the second case: "How clever".

We find that in certain cases, especially in bad periods, the Kathak teacher places an enormous onus on the dancer to steer clear of acrobatics, using difficulties just because they are difficult. The consideration of technique is important just because the average Kathak dancer is incompetent to defend Kathak either through words or dancing, against ill-informed attacks. Along with the unpopularity of Kathak, dancers are still very much misunderstood, and not accorded the status they deserve.

The system of elementary Kathak is merely a physical training. There is nothing particularly beautiful in bringing out 'Toras', 'Parans' and 'Tihas' from the feet or in turning on the toes a given number of times. There is nothing particularly beautiful about a five-finger exercise. Beauty

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only comes later in the use of which these things are put. Neither is unnatural in the sense that both can be acquired with ease by the average person; both are unnatural in the sense that all art is unnatural and must be acquired through practice. It is through a misconception of the technique that unnatural movement is always invoked in opposition to Kathak.

It will be pertinent to quote here the feelings of an outstanding exponent of Kathak dance of the present times, Kumari Damayanti Joshi, who wrote; "It is true that owing to a lack of enlightened understanding of its inner philosophy and aesthetic appeal, Kathak is in a state of obscurity. And you can take it from me that, given the necessary importance, Kathak will rise to higher level sooner or later. In its pure form, it is efficient, graceful, elaborate, and in its aesthetic appeal more terrestrial than the other forms of Indian classical dance. I see the ignorance of people—intelligent people—about the finest treasurers of our cultural heritage. I feel like shouting from house-top and say, *Kathak* is a very beautiful, expedient and dignified dance".

TAGORE SCHOOL OF LYRICAL DANCE

TO Rabindranath "all life is a dance of will", and "the universe has its only language of gesture, it talks in the voice of pictures and dance". Widely speaking, the poet's conception of dancing is judged from two standpoints; firstly, the natural phenomenon as he sees it and secondly, life, apart from nature as well as being a part of nature.

The contrast between the two rhythms of human behaviour is evinced in almost all his creations, by which I mean, the dance-dramas which can neither be called operas nor ballets in the strict sense of the terms. One of these rhythms is dominated by custom and tradition, the other breaking free as the first fresh impulses of life tempts it which is the 'motif' of the dance-dramas—is only imperfectly conveyed by words, with their necessarily limited meanings. The songs, dances and costumes suggest what the words fail to convey.

One feels tempted to call the dance-dramas lyrics, for their tone is so light, their mood so playful and their fancy so free that one does not know what else to call it. On the other hand their motive is so serious and their message so genuine. Perhaps if the creations conform to any set canons of literary or dramatic technique, they will be untrue to their theme.

The characters, whether they belong to 'Chitrangada' or 'Chandalika' or 'Natir Puja', lead lives whose every side is bound by some peculiar custom and whose every motion is prescribed by convention. Their watch word is *niyam* or propriety. They sit, rise and move according to a strict

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code of rules which none dare break. For obedience to it is the only virtue, infringement of it the only sin. They proudly declare that their wars have colour, but no passion; code of contest, but no strife; results, but no conquests; pageantry, but no weapons.

The scenes, with their playful and pungent dialogues, are delicious satires on our own conventionalised lives which are bound on all sides by '*niyam*' or propriety. Though our ordered existence moves in routine and ritual, life has ceased to grow in us. Our life dances in accompaniment with an unchanging code of rules that have method but no meaning, pedantry but no purpose, what is 'in order' is sacred and what is 'not in order' is sinful. We know no happiness save in obedience to system and convention; no fear save of failing from them.

The characters bring with them the breath of bursting youth. They sing the song of freedom. They dance the dance of anarchy. They stretch their arms to where the unknown lures, yearnings unfelt before wake in their virgin hearts. Nature speaks to them. Clouds beckon them to the unknown spaces beyond the horizon. The dancing rivulets coax them to set their hair to the rhythm of their ripples. Flowers implore them to let them adorn their ringlets. Birds sing to them of their forest groves where love waits in hiding. Age-old yearnings are thus released and every heart cries for its fulfilment. Desire drives all fear away. Timid ones become bold and fling all conventions to the wind. The new rhythm that has been discovered at last finds its cry in the song of freedom

It should be remembered that our country is highly indebted to Rabindranath Tagore for his novel and artistic idea regarding his own particular school and type of oriental dancing. This pervading atmosphere of freedom which is inherent in the poet and which is uppermost in all his activities is easily noticed in this particular school of dancing of which he is the originator. He is never curbed down, checked and burdened by any dry rules or laws. He is not at all hindered by them, but is ever anxious for sweetness, grace, sublimity and excellence. The codified matter of fact rules regarding tunes and 'Ragas' in songs, intricate 'Tals' in dancing and painting do not come in his way, he is carried on by his own whims. He is spontaneous as a stream, gay as a deer, wild as the wind and free as bird.

The spirit which prompts the poet to give life to his songs by means of dancing and to bring out their meanings and emotions by means of expressions is the spirit of novelty. The Law of Evolution guides the universe and life presupposes a change. Tagore sees, hears and studies a great deal and has wide experience. It is necessary for him to have a change and novelty in the existing schools of dancing prevalent in India. He thinks it essential and important to have a new sort of oriental dancing altogether, which does not suffer from the crudest mathematical fractions and measurements of time, nor from the highly technical gestures of hands and body, nor from depicting the historical and religious stories from the Puranas or sacred books.

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The Tagore dance is generally a song dance. A boy or a girl or a group of boys and girls gesture in accordance with the wording of the song or with its sentiments. The song or narration is in almost all cases the poet's own compositions. The Tagore school of dancing wants to express the lofty philosophy of the poet's songs. The song is sung by one or many persons and the sentiment, philosophy and emotions therein are expressed by means of bodily movements by others. There are sometimes depictions of events also, as we find in the exposition of 'Chitrangada''. This type of dancing characterises itself in flavour or Rasa.

The wording of the song supersedes the dancing, and this wording is in Bengali. One can unhesitatingly say that the meaning of the song is not at all understood by a person who is not well versed in the same language by only looking at the movements of the limbs of the dancer. The song is given prominence over the dance and the wording and the meaning of the song is of primary significance.

The dance-dramas presented in dance and song, with the *Abhinaya* (acting) portions set as a chain of small cameos, placed wide apart, must appear as a strange although pleasing--departure from the practice of modern stage craft, specially as it obtains today in India. It may be safely said that the reform and remodelling towards the Indianising of the stage in this country was initiated by Tagore. Almost all the dance-dramas composed by the poet are reminiscent of the Indian art of Drama. Nritya (dance), Gita (song) and Abhinaya (acting), all are presented in a highly refined and pleasing blend, and the setting has been austere and subdued.

UDAY SHANKAR'S SCHOOL OF DANCE

SHANKAR was a painter in the beginning of his career. He was impressed by the rich and artistic carvings and images of Indian gods and goddesses in South India. He, at the outset, like Isadora Duncan of America, who critically examined the Greek statues of Greece and Athens, formed his impressions and ideas from the gestures of these carvings, which are ritualistic poses of some form or the other of scriptural dances from time immemorial. Then he posed in the same postures as depicted by the statues and in his expositions, it seemed that those lifeless, dumb and still images of Ellora, Ajanta and Sittanavasal had sprung up from their slumber and came to life. He in fact had infused life and spirit into the statues and paintings.

In his school of dance, there are 'Angikabhinaya', 'Yatharasam', or gestures in accordance with the sentiments, continuous rhythm, circumstantially, of course, the dance is more varied and the successive dances change. This variation explains the lack of monotony. The fluidity of the movement is not even serpentine but more like the wreathing of smoke.

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Undoubtedly a genius, Shankar had to labour hard to realise the deeper significance or the spirit of the art. It will only be sufficient to point out what G.N. writes[12]: "His use of the 'Karanas' and 'Angaharas' taken by themselves is of no mean merit but as a whole they at times fail to produce the effect sought for. As for the use of the 'Rechakas', we may note that at least two of the varieties are seldom brought into play. And in the execution of the 'Pindibandhas' he is more original than faithful to the Shastric principles. Then again, the free use of 'Karanas' which he indulges in, is not sanctioned by the authorities on the art of dancing. How for his innovations are improvements upon the original should rather be left to the appreciative art critic." But it can be undoubtedly said that those were not improvements upon the original but were creations of the dancer to suit his own convenience.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote the following sentence in a letter to Uday Shankar soon after his return from abroad in 1938. "You have earned for yourself rich praise from the connoisseurs of art in many different lands and yet I know you feel it deep within your heart that the path to realisation of your dream stretches long before you, where new inspirations wait for you and where you must create in a limitless field new forms of living beauty."

It is worthwhile to quote in this connection the praise showered by Miss Pola Negri, the celebrated film star, on Shankar in the following lines: "It was superb. In fact all the movements of all his dances are superb indeed. Shankar is simply divine. I cannot say more; and I cannot say less. Shankar is simply divine."

Shankar made a bold attempt at compositions complete with rhythm, tempo, spacing and expression. The representation of emotion through Abhinaya definitely occupied the foreground in his executions. In classical compositions Shankar brought in the use of South Indian Mudras together with the play of facial expression—especially the eye—to a certain extent, in combination with the more universal language of the pose and the body rhythm. In this his Guru, Nambudri's mastery of the classical art was of great help.

Uday Shankar earned fame as a creative artiste—a genius in novel dance creations in movements, ballets and group dances with the help of light, colour and stagecraft. Everything on this earth he could demonstrate by gestures to the common and lay spectators. Every movement of his could be understood, whether it was a wall, a chimney, or a rickshaw or an aeroplane. Nevertheless he would always maintain the spirit of Indian dance art with less adhering to the shastric principles, which according to him, should be preserved in museums.

Uday Shankar used the play of lights, step by step and stage by stage, with the help of flash lights, dimmers and slides. Being a proficient painter he could draw and put appropriate colours to the slides. He also painted the back curtains himself, particularly in the "Buddha" ballet. He tried the use of light in black and white in "Ram Lila", a gigantic shadow play. He

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used colour in Buddha ballet on the stage, made paintings on mosquito nets even. Thereafter "Lord Buddha", a magnum opus of about three hours, was composed by him and was first shown at the stadium at New Delhi to Mr Chou En Lai, the then Prime Minister of China. The effective staging of it depended on a curious optical illusions which could be effected at a particular distance from the spectators. The stage was constructed either six feet above or six feet below the level of the spectators. He advanced a step further and brought in novelty in "Samanya Kshati", exhibited on stage. The performance was a mysterious one where a number of huts were gutted on the stage. It was all like cinematography. The same device was followed in "Prakriti Ananda".

Finally he gave birth to "Shanker Scope", a new invention and an unusual variety show on the stage with the help of the film. It combined stage and screen together with magical effects, and was highly developed technically, and which created a new channel for a great industry in the country.

Uday Shankar's School of dancing, as has been handed down to his disciples, is an institution by itself, and a different school of dancing altogether, which does not strictly follow the other existing classical schools, as strictly speaking, with that of the Shantiniketan School of dancing invented by Rabindranath Tagore. If the Uday Shankar School of dancing lacks in all the ingredients necessary to term it as "classical", it may only be said that it is not so old as to fall in the category of tradition. Otherwise the school contains all the necessary qualities found in a classical school beauty, rules and regulations and what not. Perhaps not before another twenty years or more would it come in the list of traditional dances.

In the "Kartikeya" dance, Kartikeya, the handsome and heroic son of Shiva, born at the prayer of the gods to command the army of the Suras (gods) and slay the demon, Taraka, comes to make obeisance to his parents and other gods, and obtains their blessings before going to fight the demon. Finding no one there he roars out his challenge. With confidence born of strength and smile of scorn he awaits the coming of Taraka.

In the solo performance of "Indra", Shankar makes Indra as God supreme, to represent in the act of initiating the lesser gods, in the perfect art of the dance. According to Vedic tradition, Indra is the God of the Heaven, stars, clouds, thunder, lightning and rains.

"Pradyumna" depicts the deed of the son of Lord Krishna, who once troubled Shiva during his meditation. Pradyumna was reduced to ashes by a single glance of Shiva's vertical eye, but he was resurrected by the prayers of Rati, his wife. His five arrows, which he shoots from his sugarcane bow, are the flowers of lotus, the *Asoka* tree, the mango, the jasmine, and the blue lily. Some believe that his arrows are of the cruel teeth of women. Here he enhances his four attributes—love, pleasure, power and jealousy.

Shankar's creative art, masterly mind and genius are easily detectable more in his ballets than solo items. His "Shiva Tandava," "Shiva-Parvati Nrittya Dwandwa," "Rhythm of life" and "Labour and Machinery" are really remarkable.

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"Rhythm of Life" and "Labour and Machinery" are well balanced, novel and carry the modern atmosphere, at the same time full of aesthetical beauty. Those are revolutons in dancing compositions, Below are given the synopsis of these ballets.

FOLK DANCES

THE existence of folk-dance implies a certain complexity of development in the social order, and a distinction based, more or less roughly, on this complexity. In a primitive community the whole body of persons composing it is the "folk" and in the widest sense of the word it might equally be applied to the entire population of a civilised state. In its common application, however, it refers to civilisation of the western type (in such compound of folk-lore, folk-music, etc.) it is narrowed down to include only those who are mainly outside the currents of urban culture and systematic education, the unlettered or little-lettered inhabitants of village and courtryside.*

In a community of the lower culture all dancing is of the folk—the need of distinction arises when with social progress art-forms split away, develop a self-conscious technique and become the province of a profession of the cultured. In a developed civilisation we may say that folk dancing is that dancing which has developed among the peasantry and is maintained by them in a fluid tradition without the aid of the professional dancer, teacher or artiste and is not, at least in the particular form observed and practised in towns, on the stage, or in the ball room.

There is a marked distinction between folk-dance and cultured and refined classical dancing prevalent among the higher circle on one hand, and folk-dance and primitive dance on the other. Folk-dance is for the sheer pleasure of the performers and not for the entertainment of the public. The primitive and aboriginal dancing was nothing but a spontaneous and emotional rhythmic expression preparatory to a ritual or fight. Folk-dancing with the development of civilization is an outcome of the primitive dancing and it discards all the spontaneity, chivalry and to some extent indecency. Primitive dance is the foundation of folk-dance and folk-dance of a more refined one. Refined dance when degenerated comes down to the category of folk and folk with culture and better treatment ascends to a refined one.

The emotion expressed in refined dance is artificial when depicted on the stage but in folk it is original and natural. As man becomes civilised and enlightened, shyness holds him, driving simplicity away. This we can easily detect comparing children to adults. In the former case, the children are more free and distant from shyness, which comes with the age and

*For detailed information see author's *Folk-dance of India*, published by Kitabistan.

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culture. Likewise there is a freer play and expression of emotion in primitive dance than in folk.

Folk-dance is of great national importance and aesthetic value. There is truth in Washington Irving's remark that the character of a people is often to be learnt from their amusements; "for in the hour of mirth the mind is unrestrained and takes its natural bent". And so it may not be too much to say that the progress in the dance means progress in civilisation, and that to show the advance made by any nation, in this art is to record its approach towards refinement. Folk-dancing of a nation is the nation's mirror, it bears and constitutes the nation's temperament, art, culture, simplicity, social and political status, functions and creed.

The indigenous folk-dances of India may at the outset be divided into two classes, viz., the women's dances and the men's dances. The sexes do not generally take part in dancing together, except a very limited few among the Santhals and the aboriginal classes. The dances may be divided again into three classes; viz., (1) martial or heroic, (2) social, semi-religious and connected with seasonal festivals, and (3) ritual.

It is difficult to draw a line between social and ceremonial dances. To assign, as is sometimes done, a ceremonial or religious origin to social dancing as a whole seems in the state of the evidence dangerous. The folk-lorist is well aware that the serious ceremony of one stage of development may become the adult amusement of the next, and the children's game of next phase in time. Though there is evidence of borrowing from ceremonial sources for social purpose, it would not be prudent in the case of the social dance to forget that the impulse to mere amusement is general and early. They should be careful not to read symbolism into obvious actions of the body or the natural formations into which a number of dances may fall or the patterns they trace.

Seasonal and ceremonial dances may have become little more than a periodic diversion and show, but they fear their own marks, and inferences about origin, and function may be drawn by examination of the festivals and concurrent ceremonies with which they are linked, features of the dances themselves, and the attitude towards them which persist, however much the original meanings may have been forgotten, by the performers and the communities in which they survive.

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1. "Virata Parva"—*Mahabharata.*
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3. Mainpur of Manikpattam or the *Mahabharata* was a seaport at the mouth of the Lake Chilka. It was once the capital of Kalinga. The situation of the capital of Kalinga is described in the *Mahabharata* and the *Raghuvamsha* and also the name accords with that of Manikapattam vide *Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India* by Nundo Lal Dey; *Ancient India* by Cunningham; and *Vishwakosha.* "Adi Parva—*Mahabharata* and *Vishwakosha* about locality.

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5. Anantapur District Gazetteer (1935), pp. 36-37.
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Balasaraswati in a Bharatnatyam Padam

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Sculptural Dance Frieze
— Nagarjunkonda

Yamini Krishnamurti
in Bharatnatyam

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Drummer from Konarak Temple — Sculpture in the round and larger than life

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Manipuri Guru demonstrating a Manipur 'ras' movement

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Two Manipur Drummers doing a drum Dance

A sculptural movement of a drum dancer — Manipur pangcholam dance

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Manipur Lai Harouba dancers — usually dancers dance in a village temple compound on festive days

Manipur Ras Lila dancers — Krishna and the gopis

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An Innovative Dance Drama by Uday Shankar and his troupe

Uday Shankar — Pioneer in innovative modern Indian Dance Ballets

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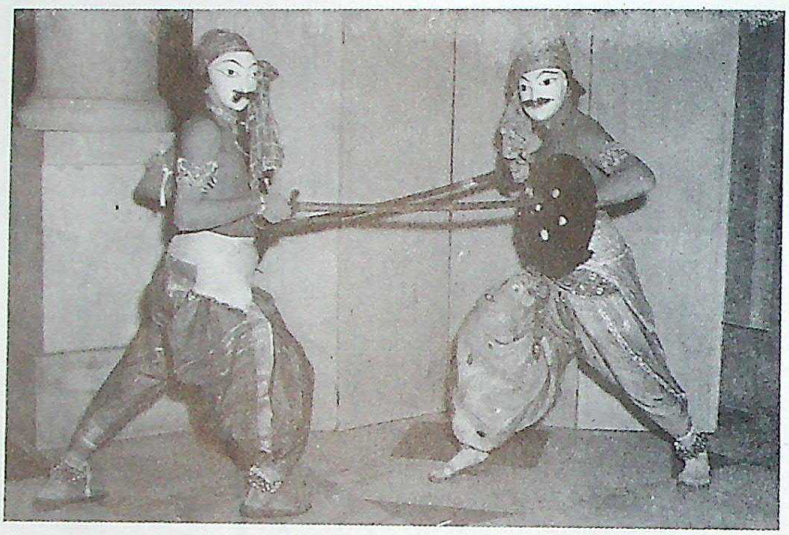
Seraikella Chhau Dances with Masks — traditional dances with masks of mythical characters, birds and animals and with highly stylised movements



Yakshagana Dance Drama — a traditional dance drama of Karnataka, though sometimes Kuchipudi and Bhagavata mela are also called Yakshagana plays

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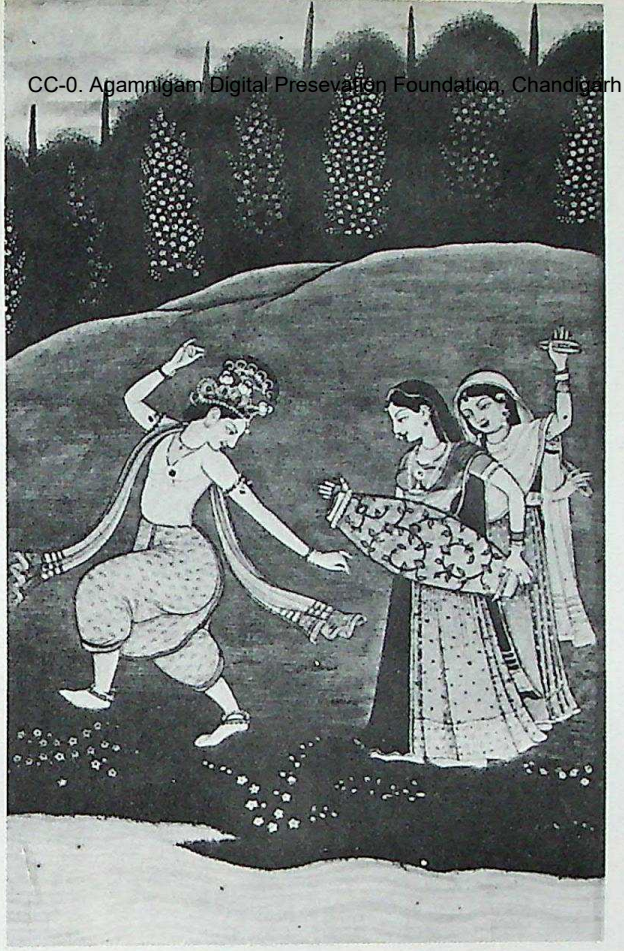

Krishna Dancing in Braj
— A Pahari Painting
18th Cent. A.D.

Kathak Dance — A later
Moghul painting

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Kumudini Lakhia in a Kathak Dance movement

Kumudini Lakhia and Birju Maharaj in a Kathak Dance Drama

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Kathak Dance — an 18th Cent. Pahari Painting

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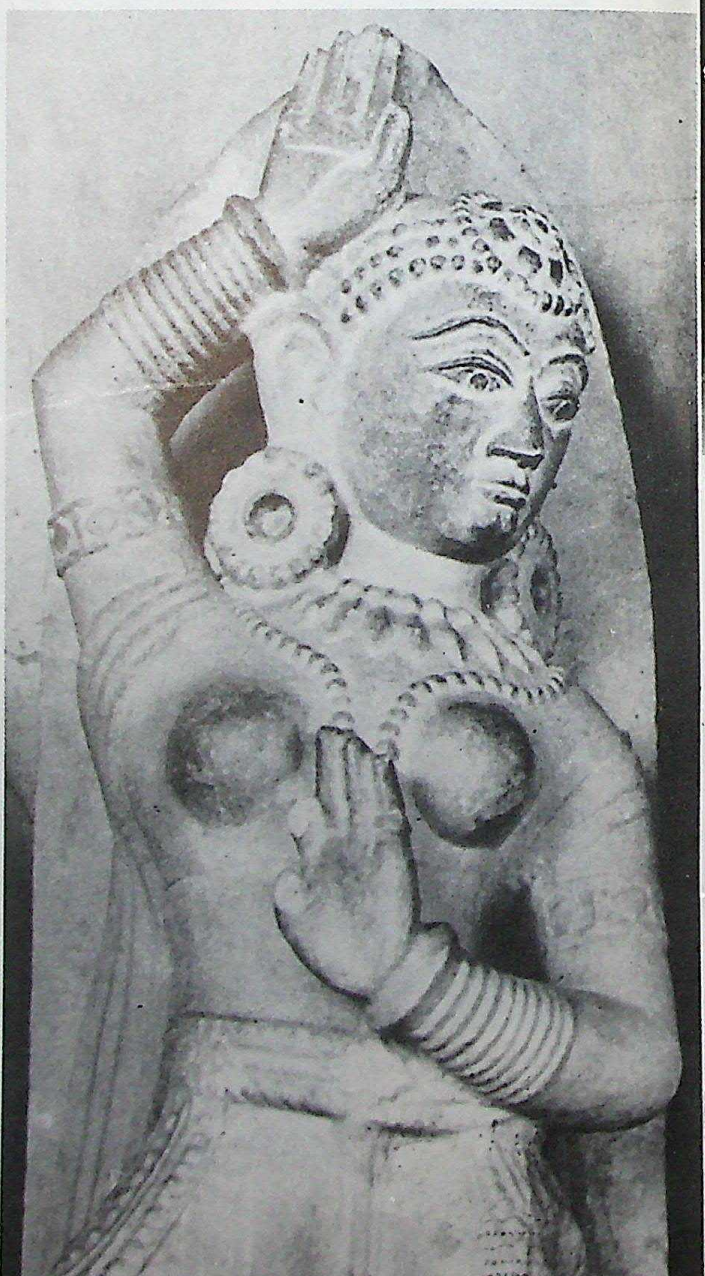
A dancer and musicians from a panel in Ajanta Caves — the costume and hair-style is Persian or Khorasani

A kathak dancer's stance — Rajasthani sculpture of about 12th Cent. A.D.



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Kathakali Dance Drama — The hero, the heroine, the drummer and the singer, cymbals and gongs all combine to carry the epic theme forward inexorably, in a larger-than-human world atmosphere.

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Sanjukta Panigrahi in Odissi Dance

Indrani Rehman in Odissi Dance Sequence — The costume is innovative and contemporary but based on Orissa Dance sculptures.

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Rukmini Devi in Bharatnatyam

Balasaraswati in Guru's role in teaching Bharatnatyam

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Ballet in Bharatnatyam — An Innovative composition by Darpana Dance Centre of Mrinalini Sarabhai

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PART III

PRESENTATION AND STAGE-CRAFT

Music

☐

Time and Rhythm

☐

Costumes

☐

The Appearance of the Dancer

☐

Stage

☐

Light

☐

Influence of Ballet

☐

Choreography and Impresario

☐

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MUSIC

WE are not concerned here with music or Indian music in general, but rather Indian music in connection with Indian dance, or in other words, instrumentation and orchestration of Indian music in relation to dance. The music of India offers a most complete example of melody untouched by harmony. Musical literature refers not seldom to the 'laws of melody', but makes no attempt to formulate them, because European melody is always harmonised, and it is nearly impossible to say what part of it belongs to harmony and what to melody. From a system innocent of harmony, like the Indian, we realise that melody swings, in the first instance, on two pivots—the vocal tonic (Amsha) a sort of 'Ecclesiastical Dominant' at a pitch that varies with the mode, and the tonic in our sense of the word supported by a drone (Kharaj) and, secondarily, on notes related as fourth or fifth to either of these. On this varying distance between the two tonics depends mainly, the character of the mode (Raga)—poignant if the Amsha is high; festive or placid, if low.

Records of the early developments are wanting, but something of the story can be reconstructed by examining the music of existing primitive races and the relics of early instruments. In all instruments we find three essentials: (1) a force to cause (2) the vibration of an elastic body, and (3) a resonator by means of which the vibrations are amplified and carried to the ear. These three essentials may be called briefly the originator, the vibrator and the resonator. In flutes, these are the player's breath, the air reed at the mouth-hole, and the column of air at the tube; in reed instruments, the player's breath, the reed and the tube; in trumpets and horns, the breath, the vibrating lips, and the tube; in bowed insrutments, the friction of the bow; the string and the body of the instrument; in harps and lyres, the plucking by finger or plectrum, the string and the body.

It is regrettable that the main cause for not having orchestration in Indian music is that there is disunion among the instruments. Sangita is the Sanskrit word for music, which denotes unity in *gita* which is interpreted as, the unity of Nritya, Vadya and Gita (dance, playing on musical instruments and singing). These three together constitute '*sangita*'. It must be remembered that there should be unity in the three elements. This is a very common interpretation. But the correct interpretation should be that

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it is not only essential to have unity in Nritya, Vadya and Gita, but there should be unity in the elements which constitute the above three factors.

A few elements which constitute Nritya are orchestra, postures, dress, etc., for Vadya, unity in the different instruments and for Gita, unity of vocal music with the instrumental accompaniment. We are here concerned with the unity and concerted action of the different instruments to make an orchestra and the functioning of that orchestra with the dance.

If music accompanies dance and both of them strive to depict a certain idea, meaning or story, music fills up the gap where the movements and gestures employed in dance fail to narrate a particular emotion. Music, as it were, provides the life of the dance. Music is both master and partner of the dance.

The question is often asked whether all music is suitable for all dance. This is a wrong viewpoint. It is not a question of sentiment, but of fact. Much music by its structure is quite unsuited for the dance. A dancer cannot perform a solo of more than a very limited duration; the music may call for mass action where the story of the dance calls for a solo, and so on. In using already-composed music there is a double risk; fitting a theme to it, fitting movement to it. Only in the case of the simplest or most formal music is this possible. The same difficulty arises again when dance music is composed after seeing the dance. Every portion of the music is composed to fit in every stepping and movement of the dance. The music thus composed is a faulty one.

Western music within a few years has taken enormous strides in all the phases of the development of instrumentation, orchestration, chamber music and operatic music. It is really wonderful how the Westerners go on repeatedly experimenting both the throbbing quality and a sort of stimulant in the nerves even if one does not understand it perfectly. It produces a kind of energy and zeal. This has been possible only by bold research work and experiments, by ever willing to change from better to best and never being satisfied with what is existing. It is the desire to be continually creative, to be novel, to be different, that is the secret of their success.

In India the condition is altogether different and consequently deplorable. It is not that there is a dearth of good musicians, but there is very little of experiments and researches made in this direction. There are two reasons for it. Firstly, the professional musicians are so biased and selfish that they have an inward and private enmity towards each other. This enmity arises from certain differences of technicalities among the various 'Gharanas', or families of eminent and famous musicians. A member of one 'Gharana', howsoever remote and distant he may be, will always find faults with a member of another one, when he sees the other playing or singing well and sometimes excelling him. Most of the professional musicians or Ustads do not teach their pupils who are really promising, and may turn out as a first class musician in all the intricacies and finest elements of the art. They fear that in this way the trade-secret of their family will

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go out of their control. They teach the art whole-heartedly to their issues and quite often it so happens that the son of a musician is not so talented and does not even possess liking for music or have a musical temperament. Thus the development and progress of music are retarded at the very root.

Secondly, the musicians take everything for granted as God's truth what their predecessors had said or done and never go against the practice adopted by them or against the conventions and rules. It is not possible in every case that whatever rules the musicians had framed or whatever they practised might be true. Admitting that the rules are true and correct, still under the influence of modern enlightenment there is always scope for improvement. The successors who come after them, should learn what their forefathers knew and on that should make researches, should add what is good and should subtract what is bad. In this way they should bring in a change and never be content and satisfied with what is existing or what they possess.

We need to examine whether music is made for musical instruments, instead of instruments being built to produce the best music they can. We may come to believe in the theory ascribed to Stravinsky that each instrument should produce no passages that are not peculiar to its own timbre and inappropriate to any other. This is as if no gentleman should ever say anything that could be said by a lady; and vice versa. If he or she does otherwise none can stop doing that, but it is an admitted fact that it will not be so much effective and appealing. For example, "Jhala" is possible in both the instruments, viz., Harmonium and Sitar, but the hearers will never appreciate this particular technique on Harmonium, because it is not so soothing or attractive as on the Sitar. Every instrument must confine its work up to its own appropriateness. The conductor must see that a particular instrument is best suited to a particular work and he should allot accordingly.

The first requisite for having a good orchestra is an imagination exercised by training. Rules for orchestration and instrumentation are not enough and neither is more practical experience. A student who masters good rules without training his imagination merely protects him from learning by experience. The commonsense of the matter is obviously this; the arm-chair reader can vividly imagine effects that he has heard, and can recognise similar effects when he hears them on an orchestra that is new to him; and so with effort and practice he can realise the effects of sounds in new combinations. The complexity of the combinations has, in reason, little to do with the difficulties of imagination; and familiarity with the type of music is always a paramount factor. The difficult task which is before the conductor is to see the temperament of the audience, which composition will be appreciated by the hearers at a particular time and place and the composer has to verify the taste of the public. The blending of melodies and harmony, and tunes should be set according to the likes and dislikes with regard to the types of tunes by the masses, but keeping a high standard all the same.

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One more thing should be remembered and taken into consideration by the Indian orchestra composers and conductors and that is the apt and appropriate choice of a particular tune to express a particular emotion. It is very necessary at the time of Indian dance. The dancer shows a certain emotion, the music should be so fitting as to describe the same emotion. An emotion which is very violent and warlike, viz., of cruelty, revenge, anger or fear should not be backed by such a piece of music which excites a contrary emotion, viz., devotion or pathos.

It should be admitted at the same time that the Indian instruments are not really meant for orchestral purposes. The number of Indian musical instruments in the present age is very small and limited and these do not possess volume. It becomes very difficult for all the hearers to enjoy the finest tune of an instrument, say, the Sitar, if it is played in a big hall. There should be an increase in the number of instruments and their volume to make a good orchestra. The modern temperament of Indian listeners and musicians is that Western instruments should not be introduced. There is no harm in introducing Western instruments so long as instruments of those types and capabilities are not manufactured in our country. It is always advisable to produce good music from which ever source is available, instead of marring and destroying the effect. Research work should also be made with regard to the shape of the instruments.

It should be noted also that orchestration does not mean either increase of instruments or of volume; it means the richness and happy blending of melodies and harmonies. Indian music is melodious and the Western harmonious. At times practising of chords which is a combination of notes, whether consonant, dissonant or fortuitous, for simultaneous hearing governed by rules based upon acoustics and the usage of recognised composers (which is an essential factor in harmonical music) becomes inconvenient and utterly impossible. There are tunes in Indian music which do not allow much scope for chords. As for example, "Malkauns" instead of all seven notes has only five, discarding "Rekhab" and "Pancham". Here if chords are used the two notes will have to be deliberately left out to keep the purity of the Raga. Furthermore, there are such tunes which are sweet only for their high and rich melodious technicalities and they are made ugly if chords are inserted to depict them. This has been practically conceived and discovered through experiments. But even then, the Western modes of harmony should be borrowed by Indian music keeping the purity of the music intact and having the beauty and sweetness increased. The blending should be necessary and possible, without extravagance or unnecessary flourish.

It has been remarked by critics that Indian music should not imbibe harmony from the Western music. "In all art there are monumental and articulate elements, masculine and feminine factors which are unified in perfect form. We have here the sound of *Tambura*, which is heard before the song, during the song, and continues after it: that is the timeless absolute, which as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. On the

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other hand there is the song itself which is the variety of nature, emerging from its source and returning at the close of its cycle. The harmony of that undivided ground with this intricate pattern is the unity of spirit and matter. We see from this why this music could not be improved by harmonisation, even if harmonisation were possible without destroying the modal bases: for in breaking up the ground into an articulate accompaniment, we should merely create a second melody, another universe, competing with the freedom of the song itself, and we should destroy the peace on which it rests."[1] The saying is highly idealistic and impracticable.

Another criticism of dogmatic ideas and devoid of reason is that of Sir Richard Temple who says, "Never be tempted to mix Indian with European music. Nothing could be more inartistic. I would go further and say, never introduce European music at all into Indian films for the Indian market. You may import a pair of trousers, a social custom or even a wife but NOT music. Music is the soul of the people and that you cannot import."[2]

It has been practically seen that Indian music can be Westernised with certain modifications and such musical compositions are being made nowadays in dances and also in the films to meet public tastes. Admittedly these are not wholly successful ones, but it is hoped that the result will be highly appreciable and worthy of note after a preliminary tentative period of such faulty compositions. The present compositions are neither harmonious nor melodious; it is still in the making.

A traditional dance, for example, is backed by a music which is somewhat akin to the Jazz band. It is simply unwholesome and brings forth two contrary atmospheres.

Another drawback with the Indian orchestra conductor is that he errs very often as to the position of the instruments on the stage. In a dance the correct seat to be assigned to an instrument player from where his instrument will be prominent in volume or in other words, from where he will do his necessary function well, invariably *is not* properly examined by the conductor. The same difficulty arises before a microphone—the respective places where the instrument players will sit in order to give the best volume of sound or the pitch of sound as is required from different instruments. The setting arrangements or placing of instruments on dance stage are different from those before the mike.

Another great difficulty which the Indian orchestra conductor has to face is to allot the place for the whole orchestra. It has been practically observed that if the orchestra people sit on the stage leaving enough space for the dancers for their demonstrations, it produces the best effect. The conductor must be in a position always to see every movement of the dancers and lead his musicians accordingly with the harmony produced by them. But there are three drawbacks in it; one, that if the orchestra is composed of a big number, the stage will not allow so many persons with their respective insruments and also enough room for dancing demonstrations; two, that the musicians will also have to put on costumes in accordance

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with the theme in order to create an accurate atmosphere, and three, that in Indian dance, owing to the change of public temperament, Western instruments cannot be brought on the stage. Bringing of European instruments onto the stage gives a contrary effect to the Indian subject. In dance sequences of Shiva, Krishna and Radha, if instruments like clarionets, cornets, saxophones, violins, chellos, pianos or harmoniums are played on the stage, the question may be raised whether the gods and goddesses used to play those instruments in ancient days. It is more prudent if those are used from behind the screens. The audience will be quite in the dark as to the instruments played; they will not mind the sound but the shapes matter much and perhaps, not even recognise the respective sounds arising from the different Western instruments. They will obviously form an idea that the instruments played behind the screens are all Indian.

To place the orchestra behind the screens or within the wings is the worst folly of the conductor. The conductor very often fails to keep pace with the dance. Either he lags behind or goes faster than the dancer because he is unable to see him. A few musicians will say that this difficulty can be overcome by enough practice. But the desired result cannot be obtained by enough practice; it is achieved scientifically and mechanically. A gramophone record can serve that purpose, in which time is regulated by machines.

The best place for the orchestra is before the stage in the pit, because from there the musicians get a full view of the stage and they need not change their costume with every pantomime or to suit the subject-matter. This is because the audience will be unable to look at them or see their instruments. But sometimes neither a touring dancing party can afford to tour with a big orchestra nor every dancing hall possesses a big pit for the musicians.

Javanese music like Indian music is linear and melodic. Some of the notes of Gamelan are extremely intriguing, but the joint efforts of Dutch and Javanese musicians have made it possible to evolve a strikingly impressive orchestration. One of the attractive features of the programmes of Java Broadcasting Station is the periodical presentation of Javanese orchestral music. In Japan also this kind of success in orchestration of oriental music is achieved to meet the modern demands. In India some attempt is being made by the Calcutta Radio artistes, but the success is not yet appreciable. There is a great future and field for orchestral music in India.

The accompaniment of music with Kathak dancing is meagre and is generally confined to a single line of 'Lahara.' It is always jarring to the ears on account of repetition. The tabla is played with all its intricacies for *tal*. The dance loses all its beauty and charm and only a dry show is presented. The music and timing with Tanjore and Kathakali schools of dance seem to be odd to an audience of Northern India: The *bols* are all mixed up and the same *bols* sometimes are played for different *tals*. The classification is not so fine as in North Indian music. It is the characteristic of the Karnataka School of music.

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It is a matter for consideration as to what extent a chorus, as the background, can be applicable to give life to a dance and please the audience instead of a good orchestra. It may be suitable for operas, but not in refined and polished dances. It is a novel idea, no doubt, but in the practical field it is highly unscientific. Musicians like Bach, Beethoven and Wagner, who were regarded as the best orchestra conductors in their own times, would have laughed at the suggestion of introducing chorus as the backbone. When the song becomes the background and the words are given prominence, there is no need of repeating the same by means of gestures. The Tagore school of dance which provides chorus instead of an orchestra would, for example, imitate a theme or word representing 'sky' occurring in the song, by an upward movement of the hands. This is crude and overdoing the thing, and takes away all the beauty of the dance. Furthermore, the intricate and delicate nuances, chord and harmony of an orchestra are impossible to be reproduced by the human voice or chorus as a whole howsoever developed that may be.

TIME AND RHYTHM

TIMING and rhythm play an important part in every sphere of natural and artificial activity. We have mornings and evenings, the seasons, births and deaths, maturity and such other phenomena in a regular and specified time. Even in our daily lives, if we do anything against the prescribed time, it brings in disorder. In every work, whether it be physical or mechanical, time automatically comes in. It exists in its widest form and it is the work of human beings to specialise and do research work on it. Likewise we have timings in dance and music too, which do not mean that a particular time is meant for staging a particular dance or for singing a particular tune or Raga, but it signifies the time measurements in music, whether it is instrumental or vocal and the movement and flow of the body and the steps.

Timing and beat in music and dance are somewhat akin to metre in verse. Versification is the art of making and the science of analysing the assemblage of words placed together so as to produce a metrical effect. According to Max Mueller, there is an analogy between 'Verses' and the Sanskrit term *vritta*, which is the name given by the ancient grammarians of India to the rule determining the value of the quantity of Vedic poetry. A verse is a series of rhythmic syllables, divided by pauses. It also denotes a series of sounds ordered and measured in a particular way. The unit of measurement for this flowing or rhythmic movement is usually a foot, since by the arrangement of these syllabic groups, as in dancing with which primitive poetry were associated by the foot, the character of the rhythm is determined. It has been previously mentioned that rhythm and

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time sprang up from Mahadeva's Damaru, the time giving instrument. Damaru gave the first sound *nada* and gave birth to the rhythm of the creation of universe.

Within the simplest scheme there lie infinite possibilities of musical cadence and ripples of sound, due to alliteration, distribution of vowels, rhyme and subtle fluctuations and inversions of stress. Rhythm in verse is like rhythm and regular timing of an Indian song or a *gat* (a musical composition) on an Indian musical instrument and also like the regular movement of the body muscles and the feet during a dance performance and it differs from a rhythm in prose in that it can be anticipated. In all metres the mind foresees and the ear expects a certain scheme of recurrences, which constitute the particular measure, and the mind is satisfied when the expectation is met. And provided that this scheme is sufficiently preserved to answer expectation, continuous and slight departures from it—a variety within the unity—are received with added pleasure. The rhythm of verse stimulates the attention and gives to speech a musical and heightened quality, which makes language so ordered, the appropriate gesture of emotional and imaginative experience in dance.

It may be said that dance rhythm in its origin included verse or song rhythm. The evidence of collected national songs shows that rhythmical effects among primitive peoples have been allied or subordinated to expression in martial or other emotional dance and song.

It seems likely at any rate that primitive man, chanting and dancing, accommodated his song to his step. The sort of step, were it skip, jumps, or shuffle, single or combined, shall here be said to mark time; the figure of the rhythm. Rhythm, then, may be accounted for by the instinct of the dancer to swerve from one side to the other. As has been pointed out very ingeniously by Rowbotham in his *History of Music*, the popularity of triple five in dancing may have resulted from the natural tendency to skip for joy or from high spirits. In this movement we have a heavy beat of one foot followed by a light beat of the other, otherwise expressed by a long note followed by a short note—the "trochee".

Before going on to study the difference between rhythm and time beatings and their inter-relationship, we should examine the chief characteristics of rhythm. The conception of rhythm in the widest sense is very vague and difficult to explain. It is for the perceiver and the listener to understand and to form an idea about it. The capacity is inherent in man.

It is not at all necessary that rhythm occurs in movement. There can be rhythm without any movement. There is rhythm in a statue, a painting and a dancer when he or she is standing still in an artistic pose. It is on the other hand not advisable to believe that rhythm is absent with the movement. It is certain or in every case it is true that there must be rhythm with every movement, whether it may not be artistic or beautiful, but it is possible to see rhythm in objects which are static.

It is clearly explained by Dr Tagore as follows, "What is this rhythm? It is the movement generated and regulated by harmonious restriction.

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This is the creative force in the hands of the artist. So long as words remain in an uncadenced prose form, they do not give us any lasting feeling of reality. The moment they are taken and put into rhythm they vibrate into a radiance. It is the same with the rose. In the pulp of the petals you may find everything that went to make the rose, but the rose which is *Maya*, an image, is lost, its finality which has the touch of the infinite is gone. The rose appears to me to be still, but because of its metre of composition it has a lyric of movement within that stillness, which is the same as the dynamic quality of a picture that has a perfect harmony. It produces a music in our consciousness by giving it a swing of motion synchronous with its own. In perfect rhythm the art form becomes like the stars which in their seeming stillness are never still, like a motionless flame which is nothing but movement."[3]

It can be said that there is movement not in perception or an actual materialistic movement but there is an artistic movement in imagination and aesthetic observance. It is also a familiar fact that dancing originates under almost the same conditions as song or any other kind of vocal utterance; and therefore the rhythmic elements and the melodic elements are only different forms in which the same class of feelings and emotions is expressed.

"All dancing is ultimately derived from expressive gestures which have become rhythmic through the balanced arrangement of the human body, which makes it difficult for similar actions to be frequently repeated irregularly."[4]

Indian music and Kathak dancing specialised immensely on the side of timing or Tal. The broad and wide beatings are divided and subdivided even in the farthest possible fractions and they constitute together a particular Tal. These are several in number and even when their beatings seem to be the long run they differ with each other. Every Tal bears its own particular name.

In order to bring about a marked distinction among the various Tals, the *chhandas* or compositions are to be noted. Chhandas are metres which are the guiding principles of Tal and an Indian musician is deemed to be perfect only he when, without asking the Tal or Chhanda, begins to give beat to the compositions. In English music the time of a composition is generally indicated at the beginning of what is termed as the 'time-signature', in the shape of a fraction specifying the number of aliquot parts of a semi-breve which each measure contains. An Indian time-giver or keeper sits with his tom-tom and is so well versed and his ear is so sharp that as soon as he hears the composition or tune he comes to know of the particular *Chhanda* and *Tal* and automatically begins to beat.

These time measurements and beatings are done on many instruments, a particular instrument for a particular theme of dance and the kind of tune produced by the orchestra. The instruments are 'Tabla', 'Mridganga', or 'Pakhawaj', 'Khol', 'Dhol', 'Nakkara', etc. Each one has its intricacies and finer points.

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Kathak dance delights in demonstrating technique of timing. In it success is achieved when starting from unit the performer comes again to that point after making swift poses and postures, keeping pace with the particular fractional measurements. There are subtle rhythmic differences in the intervening period also which are termed as 'Bol', 'Laggie', 'Rela', 'Gat', 'Tora', 'Paran' and so on, with their own characteristic features.

It should be remembered, however, that the queer time measurements when appreciated by the audience are not for their heart-appealing quality.

COSTUMES

DRESS plays an important part as *Aharya Abhinaya* in dance which has been explained previously. The dress should be consistent with the period of time to which the theme of the dance belongs. It must create the atmosphere and to some extent bring forth vividly the meaning and expression.

India is a country which on account of the tropical climate discards simplicity of colours. There must be variegated colours and it has been practically seen that various colours on the stage please the eyes. At times though, the philosophical themes do not need so much colour. The Tagore school dances, for example, which depict philosophical emotions do not require a conglomeration of colours. The clothes put on must be in accordance with the emotions or Rasas depicted and it has been previously mentioned that the old books have enumerated the various colours to be used for different Rasas. For instance simple coloured dresses (Saris and Dhotis, etc.) are wanted in dances exhibiting simplicity.

Now the question is of quality. It should be noted that clothes which give a pleasant effect to the eyes are best seen when those are reflected by means of stage lights. A piece of ordinary cloth will not be so pleasant to the eyes in spite of effect of light as a piece of silk or satin cloth. That cloth is best suited which is the most closed and clings to the body. Georgette or crepe silken cloth seems to be the most suitable, because these mostly cling to the body. A dancer dressed in these clothes carries appeal and is most appreciated, because every muscle of the body and its movements are clearly discernible.

A dress should be such or the mode of wearing clothes should be such as to be devoid of all indecency. The lower senses are gratified by scanty dress and some dancers of the modern age, being of low mentality, resort to blatant exhibition. It is to be discouraged. There is a limited number among the masses who like such dancers for their dress alone as their lower senses are gratified. There is not much of art in this. It may suit a cabaret where poeple mainly come to drink liquor and enjoy vulgarity. These cabaret hunters may argue that no one is certain whether ancient gods or goddesses put such scanty dresses, exhibiting the limbs of their

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body to advantage. They will as evidence produce so many statues with, at times, no clothes on the body. But such arguments are futile. The *Dhyanas* or *Stotras* of gods and goddesses in Hindu mythology are very exhaustive and describe minutely the dresses, ornaments and toilets of every god or goddess. There is no room for vulgarity or indecency anywhere. The main point to be seen is that the dancers are living beings and not lifeless statues. There must be a sense of morality and decency. It is true that sometimes the public pay good money for vulgarity but it should also be remembered that such lapses do not make or improve art. They lead to further degeneration.

On the other hand, it must be realised that the dancer should not overdress, but select such suitable costumes as to show her body contours to an advantage and enhance her physical appeal. The dancer should have a wide choice but should be guided by the choreographer for proper selection. The true dance relates to a beautiful body and dances other than this are caricatures.

The old Sanskrit treatises on dance and drama provided every colour which the garments must possess according to the emotions, but the problem comes when a number of emotions are depicted in one single dance. Will the dancer go every time at the end of depicting one emotion and change the dress to depict another? This problem is overcome by using a costume with the colour suited to the main emotion. It may also be said that a particular kind of Sari or colour, though described by the old works as fitting for a particular emotion, is not practically suited. The first thing to be observed is the appealing quality of a particular kind of dress; how the refined spectators will look at it may go radically against the codified principles. Going against the old prescriptions is advisable provided it achieves the best result sought for.

There is a 'Dhyana' or description for every god or goddess which narrates the dress put on by them. The artistes should adhere as far as possible to those 'slokas' and 'stotras'. Here also particular attention should be bestowed on the total effect. A dress may not be inconsistent with the description given by the 'Stotra', but there must be some reason to put on a particular dress and to depict the nature and characteristic feature of a particular image, god or goddess. There may be many descriptions regarding one god or goddess and they may vary. A judicious selection is essential.

The main work lies in fitting the exact dress with the appearance of the dancer. The appearance should be given prominence in selecting the dress best suited to him or her. The match of colour should be in conformity with the proportionate body or its muscles. It does not mean that if a person looks charming in European costume he or she must put it on and dance on the stage. The theme comes first—the dress in accordance with the theme; then the period and country of origin, then the colour of the clothes. The colour must fit with the stature, smartness, complexion and so many other peculiarities of the dancer.

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The best designer of dress for the dancers except a choreographer should be a painter, who apart from his proficiency in painting should be acquainted with the history of the time and also have a capacity to understand aesthetics and art. A painter forms an image in his mind of the full figure of the dancer, conceives of the appropriate dress, its mode of wearing the colour, the tint of each garment or apparel and last, but not the least, the different decorative ornamentation of the dress and the body. It is he who can give the match of colours and a heightened effect to the theme of the dance.

When the kind, quality and the colour of the clothes are selected, a careful study of the borders and other decorations of the clothes should be made by the painter. Then a clever choice of ornaments, rings, wreaths, garlands, bracelets, anklets and the dressing of the hair should be made by him. But in order to do it, he must thoroughly understand the theme, the story, the philosophy and the message of the particular dance for which he is designing the dress.

Indians are known for their love of ornaments and even the male gods and rulers of ancient times were no less fond of ornaments. They could most probably afford to put them on because the country was so rich. A proper combination of ornaments and consistent with the apparel, hair dressing and the theme should be considered.

Below is quoted in this connection what *Sangita Ratnakara* understands by a good make-up. "Deep blue profuse flowing hair shall be intertwined with half-bloom flower buds and hang against the back of the body either crooked or straight as occasion may demand. The hair should also be covered by network of pearls. Round earrings with crocodile face should be worn and forehead anointed with *Kesar* and Sandal. Eyes should be decorated with collyrium and there should be jewelled bangles on the wrist and earlobes. The teeth should be enamelled white so as to reflect light and face and neck should be powdered with Kasturi leaves. Star pattern necklace and pearl strings should adorn the breasts. There should be rings studded with precious stones on the fingers. Gauze cloth either white or light coloured should be used as upper cover so that it may be used to show a flowing graceful movement and the lower garment or Sari should be of silk with a suitable colour to suit the dark or the fair complexion (of the dancer). The sari should be put on with a gather or in a flowing manner according to the custom in vogue in the country."[5] One example of the bells or *Kinkini* as described in *Abhinaya Darpana* will suffice to point out how much advanced the specialists of dance and drama were in designing dress. *Abhinaya Darpana* states the qualities of the bells (for the feet of the dancing girl) as follows: Tiny bells *kinkini* made of bronze (*kamsya*) should have pleasant sound, and should be well shaped, and have the stars as their (tutelary) deities and should remain one 'anguli' (half an inch) apart from one another. The dancing girl should bind a hundred of them or two hundred in each of her two feet with blue thread in light knots.

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The dressing of hair is another important and artistic piece of work for a painter. In old Sanskrit works we have innumerable descriptions of hair dressing and the artistes of this country have left behind them many models with artistic hair-dos. In olden times, both in the orient and the occident, the males had developed a fancy for flowing curly hair so much so that a Westerner in the event of not having long hairs would use wigs and powder it. In several parts of India there is a natural copious growth of hair, specially in Bengal and the extreme south (Kerala), and the women-folk take advantage of this growth to arrange their hair most artistically. Bobbing or shingling has yet found no place in Indian woman's toilet. A woman with bobbed or shingled hair is misfit in a dance, although it may be the fashion in vogue in the West.

The modern artistes have lost the tradition in oblivion as regards the costume worn in ancient times. Mahadeva appears on the stage with knickers on. Though there is only a single bronze statue of Shiva in the Madras Museum and another sculpture at Chidambaram depicting the Great God with tight-fitting breeches, but one or two instances cannot compete with many contradictory ones and provide no reason to be followed. Even the account in a Tamil book regarding Chidambaram describes Nataraja with tiger skin as his loin cloth. Krishna with Achkan or *Sherwani* (coat-skirt) and 'Churidar Pyajama' (breeches) and Parvati with a Lahanga (skirt with volume of gather) do not appeal to the modern tastes and are not a copy of the Sanskrit descriptions. Though these dresses are imitations of Rajput paintings, yet it should be pointed out that Rajput paintings are of a later date and paintings and sculptures of images of gods and goddesses are still in existence which were made much earlier than Rajput ones.

We have so far discussed the principles on which the designing of dresses should be based and also the misconceptions in several cases. Now we would try to discuss dresses used by a few schools of dancers. The dress of the Kathakali school is very special which we will examine here.

Masks are used sometimes in Kathakali and Chow dances. These hide the face of the dancer and hinder the exhibition of facial expressions and also those of the eyes. Kathakali dancers smear themselves with white or yellow paint and the muscles of the face cannot clearly display their work and delicate movements. The face heavily painted cannot produce exactly the sought-for expression of subtle emotions.

The dress of Kathakali dance is very special and at the same time interesting. The dancers wear long tunic with full loose sleeves which are termed *kanchuk*. They use a piece of cloth or a *chaddar* round their neck having a series of knots in one line. Apart from these they use *varma* (plates to cover the body), *kavacha* (a kind of talisman which serves the purpose of talisman too), *kundal* (ear-rings), *kireet* (head dress or crown), *hasta trana* (or ornament to protect the fore arm from the reactions of low strings) and *pushpa mala* (garland of flowers). These decorations are used keeping in mind the character and personages depicted in the dance.

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Dancers are classified according to the different *gunas* (qualities) and their faces and bodies are painted according to the intensity of these qualities. There are four classifications:—(1) Full Satwa, (2) Satwa and Rajas, (3) Rajas and (4) Tamas. The following are the paints used for the persons according to the above classifications.

Minnak : Yellow and red powder on the face with white dots of black powder on eyebrows. 'Kajjwal' (collyrium) on the eyelids. The white portion of the eyes is touched with a seed which makes the eyes blood-red and swollen. Red paint on lips. Distinctive *Tilaka* or mark on the forehead to denote Priests, Rishis, Brahmins and women.

Pachcha : (Green), green paint on the face with raised white lines made by means of ground rice and line on the portion between the chin and the jaw towards the cheek to denote kind-hearted and ambitious people, e. g., Indra, Rama, Krishna, Pandavas, etc.

(3) **Katti** : Similar to above but with more upright marks the nose is painted red and prominent moustaches of ground rice and two prominent ball-like dots on the forehead close to the nose bridge. This paint is used to depict brave and undaunted characters with mean minds, for example, Ravana, Kichaka, Hiranyakashipu and so on.

(4) **Tari** : There are three classifications of Tari. (a) *White.* White fleecy upper garment or tunic and white head dress or white hair, meant for Hanuman or monkey servant of Rama. (b) *Red.* Face, beards, upper garment red, chin, lips and round the eyes black and at times small pieces of papers are pasted on the nose and cheeks to increase the hideous effect. This is the facial paint used for Bali, Duhshasan, Kalkeya, Sugreeva, etc. (c) *Black.* Black upper garment or tunic and black beads, etc., for Kali, Kirata, Mahadeva in disguise of Kirata, etc. The difference between Kirata and Mahadeva in disguise of Kirata is that there is an addition of a half moon in the case of Mahadeva in disguise.

Besides these there are innumerable ways of painting the face and the body in Kathakali dancing. In order to depict serpent marks, lines of white, red and green are put on the face. Characters depicting birds, or '*Vidushaka*' (court jester), those who excite laughter, depicting deformed characters (*Putana*, *Surpanakha*, etc.) the same paint is used which makes the persons hideous and repulsive.

The 'Kireeta' (head dress or crown) in Kathakali is of two kinds.

(i) Triangular with a disc attached at the back. The size of the disc varies according to the high or low status of the person whose character is being depicted. In spite of similarity of dress of the five Pandava brothers it is not difficult to pick them up by the size of the discs.

(ii) Simply triangular without the disc. It is known as *Muti.* Distinguishing additions denote different characters. False locks of hair or *jata* signify a Rishi or sage, peacock's feather Lord Krishna and so on. A round white cap with silver tassels is used for Hanuman.

Besides these, painted wooden bangles, earrings, taranka keyur, nails

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made of silver, necklace, *Nupur*, etc., are used. Artificial hair is made of jute coloured with variegated colours.

The dress of a North Indian nautch girl consists of a silk or satin embroidered skirt of large dimensions running down the ankles, a full-sleeve blouse of similar stuff, a 'choli' or a piece of gauze cloth which she wraps round her upper body, and profuse ornaments. The ornaments sometimes are so profuse that they hide to a certain extent the body contours of the dancer.

Unlike the North Indian dancer, the South Indian one uses a sari, a choli stuck up in apron fashion, a *vadaṇam* or golden belt, a blouse half or quarter sleeve and other ornaments though not so profusely. The dress shows the body to advantage.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE DANCER

A dancer or danseuse must be handsome and young. The appearance counts first and foremost. The limbs of the body should be proportionate and the body must be slim. The first essential is a suitable physique. The figure should be such as to have an appeal and should be full of grace. Grace counts much. Persons ordinarily handsome, but lacking in grace are not so attractive on the stage. The dancer requires the type of charm that a fair number of her audience will call beauty, and for very obvious reason, her face and her body are the instruments upon which she plays. The dancer must be born with the perfect instrument and develop it by training. We have seen from our historical background that it is wrong to consider dancing from the point of view of the movements of the legs. The dancer must be completely expressive from head to foot. The face is as much a part of the dancer's instrument as the feet and the arms. Under the physical aptitude, natural grace should also be included. Personality is a common attribute required in every artistic pursuit. In dance it means style, movement that is controlled by the mind, instead of being a physical reaction prompted by classroom habit. An ugly person or a male dancer having effeminate limbs or a female with a manly body will never be appreciated.

For this very reason it may be taken as axiomatic that the effeminate male dancer is a bad dancer. There are altogether too many effeminate dancers in India. Grace must not be confused with effeminacy. A romantic costume does not make a man effeminate. Whatever his costume, the role of the male in dancing is either that of a lover or a warrior, and his physical attributes must be those of the star athlete. An understanding of this is essential.

Dancer should not be a heavy drinker

The artistes should not be in any way intoxicated. Intoxication mars the appearance and also the discipline of the whole dancing party and a

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dancer must be very polite, cheerful, obliging, courteous and possess adaptability. He or she should be gentle, civilised and should have the capacity to bear any sort of inconvenience, because dancing troupes have to face many difficulties—physical or mental or pecuniary—while on tour and otherwise. The danseuses should have a quality to dominate others and be careful of the clutches of unscrupulous persons. Lastly the dancer not only shows exhibitions and performances but will always be glad to turn out good pupils and teach students diligently. They should themselves learn or have a liking and willingness to learn from experts, and museums and scriptures.

Abhinaya Darpana gives the following characteristics and qualifications of a dancing girl (*Patra*).

She should be slender bodied, beautiful, young with full round breasts, self-confident, witty, pleasing, knowing well when to begin (a dance) and when to stop, having large eyes, able to perform in accompaniment of vocal and instrumental music, and to observe the proper time-beats, having splendid dresses and possessing a happy countenance. A girl having all these qualifications is called a dancer (*Patra*, distorted in the present day as *Patura* or *Paturia*).

The ten disqualifications in women that should be avoided in Natya are women with white specks on their eye-balls, or women who have scanty hair, or have thick lips or pendant breasts, or who are either very fat or very thin, or are either very tall or very short or hunch-backed, or have no voice.

Agility, steadiness, *rekha*, practice in *Bhramari* movement, the glancing eye, endurance, memory, devotion to her art, (clear) speech, good singing powers, these ten are the essential qualities of a dancing girl.

The next point to be considered is the dancers' musicality. It is obvious that he or she must possess an ear for rhythm. That is unfortunately the exclusive sense in which the musicality of dancers is usually considered. It is the bare minimum requirement without which the dancer is not fitted to appear at all. The music speaks to the dancer, the dancer interprets the music to the audience.

Use of Beards in Dancing

Another question of importance to be considered is whether male dancers with moustaches and beard are to be produced on the stage or not? In spite of the popular modern trends it looks repulsive for the male dancers to grow a beard on the face. According to mythology also the gods had no beards excepting a few; e.g., 'Agni', etc. and is not clearly known about the Asuras. But undoubtedly the treatises sometimes speak of Asuras as handsome and without moustaches and beards. It was a part of Peter the Great's general policy to Westernise Russia, bound up with his costume reforms and with his forcing of the boyars to shave their beards. We have already seen the intimate link between costume and dance. This is but one more vivid proof. Dancing is the most positive and striking

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expression of the national characteristics of the people. Change their dances and you may change their mentality. In Russia women were kept apart from the men. Introduce social dances, routs, and assemblies, make them compulsory, and Eastern seclusion must give way to Westernisation. Peter the Great realised this just as Kemal Ataturk had later. Shave the men's beards, remove their dignified and cumbersome robes and they become eligible partners for the dance.

STAGE

WE will deal here with the stage in relation to dance and not drama, music, opera or cinema. Modern dramatists are of opinion that we do not go to the dance performance to be amused or for entertainment, but in the hope of seeing more clearly into the springs of character, of getting a fresh sense of human destiny. The problem before the artistes is how to transport the audience to the land and time of the occurrence or event enacted by the characters. This they do by their movements, dress and expression but certain other environmental or surrounding elements are absolutely necessary which can easily carry an atmosphere of the same occurrence.

Bharata in his *Natya Shastra* devotes one whole chapter (Ch. 3) to the construction of the stage by Vishwakarma and to the detailed worship of the stage gods (Ranga Puja and Puja of the Ranga Devatas). He even gives the precise invocation to be used when laying the foundation of the theatre building. The acient stage of India existed in the emperor's or king's palace. It is noteworthy that, apart from the royal theatres in palaces, many plays were also produced during 'Yatra' festivals or fairs in which the stage was in the open area. 'Yatra' is somewhat akin to operas.

Bharata devotes his second chapter to the discussion of the theatre building itself. The standard theatre (*natya veshman*) was a rectangular building of 96 ft. by 48 ft. with two equal divisions of the auditorium (Prekshagriha) and the stage (Ranga Bhumi).

The stage is divided into two portions, (1) front and (2) back. Then there is a green room at the back of the back stage. There are two side wings in two sides of the front stage (12 ft. by 12 ft. each, thus making the front stage 24 ft. by 12 ft. The back stage is 12 ft. by 48 ft. and the green room is 48 ft. by 24 ft.).

The place for orchestra is reserved either in the side wing or the back stage. The green room (*nepathya griha*), it is stated, ought to be a part of the main building. It should be fairly spacious to give room to the several characters for their 'make-up'.

We are told by the sage Bharata that the decorations in a theatre should be in accordance with colour and oriental brilliance. The proscenium ought to be built of wood and richly decorated with carvings,

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wooden pots (*kalasas*), flags (*patakas*) and images of maidens (*puttalikas*). The platform must not be slippery and the lower end of the stage must be smoothly plastered with white paint.

It seems that it was the common practice to use one curtain which remained at the back. Bharata again mentions mechanical windows and lattices and also carefully notices the process of stage-carpentry (*darukrama*) and machines for the stage (*yantras*). He classified the stage properties as well, viz., *sandhima* (Bamboos covered with skin or cloth), *vyajima* (made to work by mechanical means) and *vestita* (prepared out of cloth only).

The Shakespearian stage akin to the ancient stage of India was unlocalised. By the recitation of a minute description regarding the scene, place, time, mood and locality, the audience could conjure up an imaginative picture of a supposed locality.

In an Indian theatre the present stage is a mimicry of the Western stage which existed a century ago. It is all painted, the back screen and the prosceniums. In Europe every technique of modern art has been exploited, whether of impressionism, cubism or futurism. But in India it is all crude photography. The painting is the exact resemblance or a venture towards exactness of things, whether a forest, river, street or a drawing room or a palace to denote the idea of the theme. The stage is solely in the hands of the painter and entirely depends on his own style. India has produced extraordinary schools of painting and the masterminds of painting or the renowned artistes do not come to design a stage.

The stage cannot be separated from light, it is only to light effects that the same paintings produce different feelings and emotions and lead to optical illusion. The method of design chosen is good only when it touches the imagination of the audience. Setting the dance is only part of the process of doing it so as to give it a dramatic force.

The European modern stage has not come into vogue and practice in India yet, for want of up-to-date electrical equipments. Tagore plays and dramas generally use deep green or black curtains and wings of the same colour. It is fit for philosophical themes and narratives. Kathakali stage has to do more with natural beauty and scenery. Uday Shankar's stage consists of two black screens, one in front and another at the back.

There are a few revolving stages in India, those are not at all necessary for dancing performances. The revolving stage belongs traditionally to the Japanese and was seen by the German technician, Lautenschlager who imported into Germany It is a turn-table set level with the stage floor, and propelled by a windlass from below. The setting is arranged on it in rotation, all set before the play begins and can be shifted in the twinkling of an eye. The advantages are innumerable and obvious and the disadvantage can be detected as follows. In order to get a maximum number of scenes on to the circle of the turn-table they have to be triangular in shape; each sector must be completely bounded as to hide the others; a deep stage is impossible; for a great number of scenes a revolving stage

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is inadequate. This is absolutely impracticable for the purpose of dance for want of enough space.

In this there are separate stages and when one comes in front, the other sinks down. Most notable types are those in Germany built by Hasait and Linnebach for the Dresden Opera House and State Theatre respectively. The sinking stage allows more freedom of design and space and is much better than the revolving one, but unfortunately, it is extremely costly to instal.

The Indian stage requires improvement which should be done on the Western lines and by improved methods of lighting and electricity. Stage and light must help to give effect to a particular emotion, must suggest the proper time and describe the event and locality.

The recent endeavour by Western designers is to add more to the stage. Land has become too expensive to allow the amount of space and excavation required; rising costs everywhere make such installations prohibitive. Obtaining of space is largely being experimented in the West by improved methods of lighting.

The back screen is hung horizontally which checks the vision of the audience from going farther. In order to avoid this, the screen is made semicircular by pasting cloth on woods or flat iron bars constructed in semicircular fashion. The wooden or iron frames are collapsible and can occupy very little space when not in use.

The screen at the back is painted in accordance with the theme. The painting is sometimes cubistic, mysticism. Then there are pieces of cloth cubistically painted which are hung from above and produced from the two sides which give a heightened effect. The forest scenes, ocean, heaven, hell are all depicted artistically and with great success. The same pieces of cloth and the back screen are managed accordingly by means of light. India should also borrow these methods and try them out on an experimental basis.

We hear of Kalidasa as having sometimes an open air theatre. Though it brings the desired atmosphere, it is very difficult in daylight for the performers to dance. It is no better with flood lights. He or she should be an expert artiste to do that. We have such stages in America and also in Europe. Uday Shankar had the privilege of dancing on such a stage. One of the famous open air stages in the world is the Darlington Hall in Derbyshire, England.

The painting on the screens, wings and prosceniums of the stage should be improved a good deal and this should be done by expert painters and designers. It should be both to conceal from the audience and also be suggestive. The cubistic paintings with proper colour and lighting arrangements should be adopted.

There are a few Indian dancers who advocate a white screen at the back on which the accurate shadow of the dancer falls. As an idea alone it is good. But it has limititions. It is impracticable owing to lack of proper lights and focussing and at times the net result becomes ridiculous.

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The new stage in its simplest form would merely consist of a raised platform in front of a large white surface. No prosenium or curtain would be required as the proper use of light would frame each scene. Such a stage has been evolved by the American designer, Norman Bel Geddes. In order to do it the light should be artistically and expertly handled.

LIGHT

LIGHT is the most essential factor in the dancing stage. No dance is complete if there is not a masterly play of lights; light, stage, and dress are inseparable from each other. They go side by side as well as together. Light gives a better effect to dance and to the modern stagecraft. Stage means light as has been already explained in the chapter under the caption 'Stage.' Stage is an elevated platform but light plays an important part and creates, so to speak, the stage or the atmosphere of a dancing theme.

Apart from natural lights undoubtedly in ancient India dance performances were exhibited under torches in the night, but that torch light was far from that of the Roman or Shakespearian stage. The *pradipa* or lamp of an Indian stage consisted of a thick cotton thread or innumerable such cotton pieces (*salita*) put together intertwined in a cup like pot full of mustard oil and that cup was placed on a high stand (*pilsuj*). The same practice is even now followed in the Kathakali dancing of the indigenous type. With the advent of candle sticks limelight and gas lighting arrangements were improved on the stage.

Electricity is the one element of production which makes the modern stage different from any that preceded it. The incandescent electric lamp is the modern invention which has radically changed stage equipment. The drastic change in stage lighting has been made possible by electricity.

The general lighting equipment consists of footlights, border lights, and strip lights. Localised lighting equipment includes bunch or flood lights, incandescent spotlights and carbon arc spotlights. The localised group can further be divided into fixed units and portable units.

India is very poor in modern lighting equipment and should borrow the Western methods of the use of electricity to beautify the dance items.

Lighting units placed in the foremost part of the stage may be used to illuminate the stage curtains and scrapes as a musical setting, or to furnish general illumination on the foreground of the stage.

It must not be forgotten that the work of light is to stimulate the imagination of the audience. By means of lights apparitions and realistic appearances of dreams are created. There are other devices to create an illusion—various natural phenomena are created—rain, waterfalls, rivers, ripples, snowdrops, etc. It is also possible to give the illusion motion and space.

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Ordinary white light mingled with coloured lights and paintings on the stage is able to create diversity of images whether realistic or imaginary.

A dancer's expressions are rightly exhibited by means of the actual angle of light and it entirely depends on the designer who is well apt to examine and analyse the respective angles of the dancer's movements—whether certain light will suit a profile figure or not.

The function of coloured light in the theatre is to stimulate the imagination and excite the emotions of the audience. The man in charge of lights should use them as a painter uses his brush and paints.

With various shadings, gradations and combinations of colours, a certain mood may be produced in the audience. Each colour possesses a property which creates that mood or contributes to its creation. If the light is brought upward or brightened, it elevates, inspires and stimulates and if taken down or mellowed, it creates a depressing, quieting or narcotic effect in accordance with the degree of brightening or subduing.

In order to show one particular emotion or a particular object on the stage, the major illumination is to be thrown on that object and the house lights are brought down.

Distance and space also are suggested by light. The Japanese manner is the best which executes planes cutting one another appearing directly over the brink of a hill. The eye, leaping from one to the other, imagines the distance. The space is suggested rather than revealed. The base of one plane or pillar will suggest sometimes a temple; one pillar in a gloom, pierced by a stained glass will convey a cathedral—the blackness will seem as the nave of a church. Even the window may not be shown, but a shaft of light may be thrown to suggest it. A whole factory with machines and boilers was shown on a European stage by means of adequate light and the wonderful part was that not a single object was placed on the stage except a handle of a tool which the actor was holding. That was only real.

The spotlights and focussing lights should also be such as to increase and descrease their circumference of throwing lights whenever wanted in order to change the emotional qualities or Rasas of a particular dance.

A promising field is opening up to artistes and experimentors whose work in the new medium of light will deeply affect the fine arts because it will immensely add to the aesthetic expression through form, motion and colour.

Uday Shankar throughout his life engaged himself in producing certain new creations, and for this purpose generally evolved the use of lights. First he tried with only black and white figures in his gigantic creation of "Ram Leela" in shadow play, depicting the whole of the *Ramayana* in shadows thrown on a big white screen. Thereafter the Buddha ballet on the stage in colour, followed by "Lord Buddha," a full-length shadow play in colour. Then his memorable creations by means of coloured lights in "Samanya Kashafi" and "Prakriti Ananda" took final shapes. Eventually his "Shankar-scope" brought for him world acclaim and recognition as the pioneer in the manipulation of coloured lights.

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Tapas Sen also received approbation for stage lights in dramas, dances and also for fantastic shots in films. He could create wonders. He could fill the stage with a rising flood, make a train rumble past, conjure up fire and earthquakes, make pursuing automobiles whizz past and a hundred other things by playing upon a keyboard of lighting switches and some rudimentary implements.

INFLUENCE OF BALLET

WE need not discuss this form of dance, its development and history at great length nor its spread in the West, because that is beyond our scope for the present. But incidentally we should examine the great change brought about by eminent dancers who were geniuses in this branch. This will also enable us to appreciate our own types of indigenous ballet which are prevalent in our country.

The earliest modern ballet on record is that given by Borgonzio de Botta at Tortona to celebrate the marriage of Duke of Milan in 1489. The ballet like other forms of dancing was perfected and polished in France. It is closely associated with the history of opera, but in England it came much later than the opera; for it was not introduced until the 18th century.

The word *Belette* was first introduced in the English language by Dryden in 1667 and the first descriptive ballet seen in London was the "Tavern Bilkers", which was played at Drury Lane in 1702.

In Russia alone was the great tradition of this old art carefully preserved especially in the Royal Opera House of St. Petersburg and Moscow.

At the beginning of the 20th century a great epoch and renaissance was brought about in America by Isadora Duncan. She brought in a revolution and shall be ever remembered for her mission and the treasure which she left behind for the whole world. In Isadora Duncan's new form of ballet, the maillot, the padded shoes, the ballet skirts gave way to bare feet, classic tunic and flowing drapery. There was no dancing *Sur les pointes*, but stately movement from one Greek pose to another, to the accompaniment of music always carefully chosen from the works of Chopin, Gluck or some equally famous master. It carried on an atmosphere of easiness and naturalness. Miss Duncan's figure was artistic, and supple. She had a sense of proportion, balance and rhythm which characterised her as one of the dancers of genius. She made an extensive tour and thoroughly examined with a critical eye the statues at Rome and Greece along with her brother.

India unconsciously developed this form of dance and in development it was somewhat different to the Western type in system and fashion. We have ballets in the original Kathakali, Manipur and Chow. These indigenous types from time immemorial had been practising ballet dancing in the

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depicture of themes from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the scriptures. The different schools have their own technique, rules and conventions.

The first continental dancer who exhibited Indian ballet to the West was Ruth St. Denis and she was followed by Anna Pavlova who in collaboration with Uday Shankar in the pantomime of Radha and Krishna made Indian ballet immortal in the eyes of the world.

One marked distinction between the oriental and occidental types of ballet is that the former imbibes themes from mythology, whereas in the latter one does not commonly and generally come across Bibilical events. Kathakali takes into consideration the themes from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* and enacts the characters from those great epics. We, on the other hand, do not usually find the characterisations of, say, Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mother in Western ballet, barring in a very few like "Job", etc.

Modern Indian dancers have improved ancient Indian ballet in the light of the West. More especially Uday Shankar like the great Duncan with his Shankaresque poses has brought a new wave in the culture of ballet. His ballets are mythological and also lyrical. This is the case with other dancers. Tagore School endeavours more or less in lyrical ballets like the Western 'Checkmate'. Others amongst the modern dancers are now attempting to depict Muslim themes. Mrs Sadhana Bose had "Omar Khayyam" akin to Western "Giselle".

Shankar brought about a revolution in creating ballets of political interest which were absolutely novel in the history of Indian ballet. His creation of "Rhythm of Life" is an outcome of the modern Indian problem of political constitution though it has been treated very diplomatically and carefully. It not only shows the position status, dilemma and conditions of different classes and communities but has a hidden idealism which places it as one of the masterpieces of ballet compositions of the world.

The theme of the ballet "Rhythm of Life" though previously narrated, may not be out of place here, and is as follows:

This ballet is somewhat identical to the political ballet "The Green Table" which is a major work outside the Russian tradition, because it is a work of outstanding merit. It is a powerful indictment of the failure of the League of Nations. The curtain rises on an international conference, the senile senators talk, quarrel, shouts are exhanged and then we are shown what happens when death is let lose. The curtain falls on a repitition of the first act platitudes, arguments, and shouts. Since its creation "The Green Table" has become more and more topical.

The ballet "Labour and Machinery" by Shankar, was a step forward to the development towards the novelty of Indian ballet. Though these were creations of master-hands, still there was the Western touch and idea. But if this practice continues we are sure to compete with the ballet compositions of the West and there will be no impossibility if in future Indian ballets become more and more artistic and advanced in beauty, thought and newness.

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CHOREOGRAPHY AND IMPRESARIO

Choreography

THE word is entirely unknown to Indian dance. A choreographer is the person who has the whole responsibility and on whom the production of a complete dance depends. He may not be a very good practical dancer himself, but must be able to teach the main dancer, coryphee and the bellerina. He must have good knowledge of music, the apt and fitting music, to suit the movements of the dance and also exact movements for the music. He should have sufficient knowledge of painting, of decoration, be highly well-versed to give opinions and treat artistically the theme and story of the dance. Then again, he must advise an impresario in matters of publicity and presentation. He must have a mind to conceive balance and proportion.

Arnold Haskell explains the term as, "The choreographer (clumsy word) is the person, who, guided by the music selected, arranges the movements of the dancers, creating that part of ballet which is danced." This definition seems to be too restricted and consequently deprives a choreographer from many of his divergent achievements. He must be musical, a quality Haskell leaves out in the definition. Actually choreography is an extremely complex art, calling for exceptional knowledge.

It is necessary for a choreographer to understand painting and sculpture, both historically and aesthetically. The painter and the choreographer are as closely related as the choreographer and composer, and painter and composer are also related through the choreography, as well as through the subject matter. It is necessary again for the choreographer to understand the mechanism of the theatre and the spirit of the theatre. It is necessary to have a knowledge of human nature, the ability to inspire confidence and loyality.

A choreographer is the guide and an adviser in all the branches of dances whether theoretical or practical. We had famous choreographers in the West in Fokine, Nijinska, Balanchine, Lifar, de Valois, Ashton and so on. Unfortunately we have yet to have choreographer worth the name in India as ballet dancing is on the way to development.[6]

Impresario

An impresario or 'entrepreneur' is a person who undertakes any kind of venture or entreprise. He manages and promotes any kind of entertainment—dance, music, operas, theatres, concerts and so on. The origin of the word is from 'impression' and the task of an impresario is to give impression

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or else impress upon the audience the talent and art of a dancer or musician. He presents an artiste to the public. He bridges the gulf between the dancer and the spectators. He has to change the programme according to the psychology of the audience.

Impresarios have regular established bodies and offices in Europe and North America. No artiste gets enough publicity, encouragement or even house if he does not go through and is not backed by an impresario. The impresario is the person to whom an artiste is indebted for fame, honour and money. The renowned impresario of America who presented in his country some famous artistes who became international figures, is S. Hurok. He presented Uday Shankar first in 1938.

India has a dearth of impresarios. One prominent businessman can be called an impresario and he was Haren Ghosh. To his credit he presented Dr Rabindranath Tagore and his pupils of Santiniketan in 1933, 1935, 1936, 1937 and 1940; Uday Shankar in 1930, 1933, 1935, 1940 and 1941; Bala Saraswati in 1934; Mya Tankyi and Burmese Pwe in 1934 and 1937, Guru Namboodri and Kathakali in 1936; Enakshi Rama Rao in 1936; Chow Dancers of Seraikalla in 1937, 1938 and 1941; Sadhana Bose in 1937 and 1941; Kanaklata in 1937 and 1938; Manipur dancers of Imphal in 1939 and 1940; Rukmini Devi in 1941, etc.

An impresario must possess charts of all the houses and stages of the country. Information about seating arrangements in the hall, the dimensions of the stage, rates of paper insertions in the leading newspapers, and all other necessary requisites regarding publicity, entertainment tax, dress costs, conveyance and so on should be on his finger-tips. He must first of all point out and explain the advantages and disadvantages of giving performances in particular houses and must look to the artiste's conveniences and profit. A number of organizations—continental and commercial—at the centre in New Delhi and at State-level have today come into presentation of dancers to public. The emerging pattern is not quite clear yet—nor its impact for good or not so good—in terms of encouragement of genuine talent and creative endeavour or, for that matter—public taste—its elevation or diligence? or both in varying measures.

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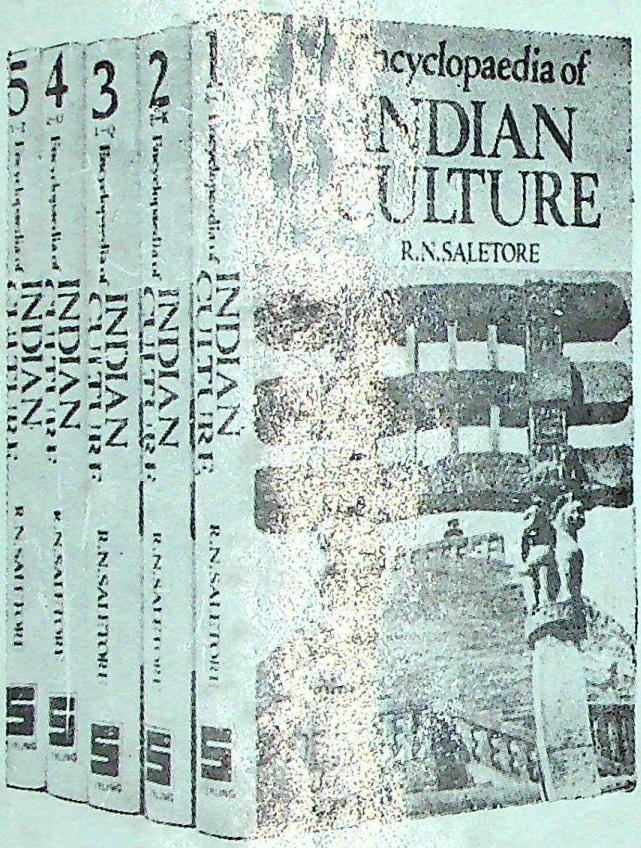

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